

# CINEFANTASTIQUE®

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## LITTLE SHOP

## OF HORRORS

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THE EFFECTS GENIUS  
BEHIND AUDREY II**

**FRANK OZ ON  
DIRECTING FANTASY**

**THE ABANDONED  
\$5 MILLION ENDING  
YOU DIDN'T SEE**

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poses with  
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for swiping script ideas

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The scoop on the secretive new series



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It's summer, and we're up to our eyeballs again in horror, fantasy, and science fiction films. Most of the big ones are previewed this issue in one form or another, from photo reports on ROBOCOP and HELLRAISER to an eye-opening article on the legal battle over the script of SUPERMAN IV, to name just a few.

The issue also takes a closer look at one of the finest fantasy films of last year, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, soon to hit the video shelves from Warner Bros for those anxious to have another dose of Audrey II, the jive-talking, man-eating plant from outer space. Our focus is Lyle Conway, the man behind the plant, whose Oscar-nominated work on Audrey II set a new standard for animatronic special effects. Never before had anything as big and as weird as Audrey II been captured with as much believability and realism on the screen. Conway's work for the film ranks with the groundbreaking creature effects of Rob Bottin in THE THING (1981) and Dick Smith's amazing prosthetic work in THE EXORCIST (1974) as another significant advancement in the field of special effects.

Also profiled is the work of director Frank Oz, who talks about achieving the gritty surrealism that made Audrey II and the fantastic universe of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS come alive. Oz also explains his controversial decision to change the downbeat ending of the popular off-Broadway play and eliminate a \$5 million special effects finale shot by miniatures expert Richard Conway. In an exclusive photo report Conway describes the elaborate destruction of New York that audiences never got to see.

Frederick S. Clarke

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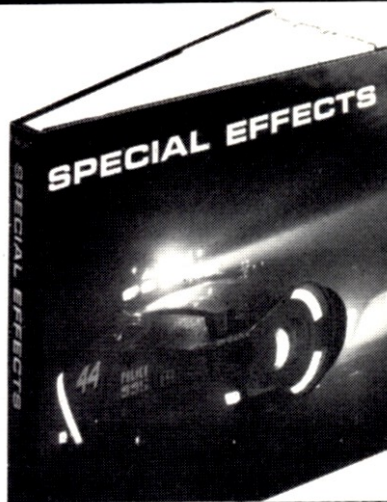
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# SPIDER-MAN

## THE MOVIE

**For Cannon films the production appears to have been a web too far.**

*By Sheldon Teitelbaum*

Cannon Films' production of SPIDER-MAN—THE MOVIE is now on indefinite hold, reportedly because a Cannon official—perhaps a bureaucrat in the company's accounts payable department—forgot to mail-in a payment to Marvel Comics for the rights to the character. New World Pictures, which owns Marvel and the film rights to its line of superheroes appears to have jumped at the opportunity presented by this unfortunate gaffe. Cannon, upon discovering what it would maintain was a mere oversight—one easily rectified—dashed off a meager check for the outstanding amount. But New World rejected the overture.

All this amid talk that Christopher Columbus is warming-up in the writer's bullpen at New World waiting for word from the studio to move on a web-crawling epic of its own. Officials at Cannon, Marvel, and New World Pictures declined to return our calls to solicit their comment on the situation.

Cannon bought the rights to Spider-Man from Marvel about three years ago, before New World Pictures purchased the comic book company and after Roger Corman let his option on the character lapse. Corman, now involved almost



Above and top right, actor Scott Leva as Spiderman and his alias Peter Parker. Leva, who made personal appearances as Spiderman for Marvel Comics, was up for the film role.

exclusively with low-budget films, probably realized that doing SPIDER-MAN properly would cost more than he was prepared to spend. Cannon's story department had trouble getting a handle on the character from the beginning. According to Joseph Zito, who was slated to direct the film, the story department had, prior to his involvement in the project, contemplated making Spider-Man a real spider, one of several outrageous ideas actually expressed on paper.

The idea of investing in a reprint of the first Spider-Man

comic book by Stan Lee never occurred to anyone. An early treatment by OUTER LIMITS co-creator Leslie Stevens substituted a new origin for the superhero involving an evil scientist named Dr. Zork, a maker of mutants who pits his monstrous creations against Spidey. In this case, Peter Parker, aka the web-spinner, was a lowly Zork employee who became a spider-man because of an experimental mishap. So much for the original Spider-Man canon.

Meanwhile, Spider-Man's mentor, Marvel's own Stan Lee, had produced a treatment of his own, one that he describes as "pure, quintessential Spider-Man. The plot was simple and linear," said Lee. "There was lots of room for good characterization and subplots—all the fun we used to have in the comic books themselves."

At the advice of Don Kopaloff, Marvel's agent, Lee gave his treatment to two young writers, Ted Newsom and John Brancato. They came back with a script that Lee said was a promising first draft. Newsom and Brancato had written their script with Tobe Hooper in mind as the film's director—Cannon had announced Hooper as director in trade ads, part of the director's now inglorious three-picture contract with Cannon that eventually included LIFE-

FORCE, INVADERS FROM MARS, and TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE II. When Joe Zito got the job, the writers just took out all the in-jokes.

Zito burned to do SPIDER-MAN, which he termed "the most magical project." The director had made two of Cannon's biggest money-makers, MISSING IN ACTION and INVASION U.S.A. Zito knew Cannon was planning the picture because he read about it in the trades. But he didn't know that Hooper had opted not to do the project and that a vacancy had opened-up.

Zito trapped Cannon chief Menachem Golan in an elevator one day and expressed his interest in directing SPIDER-MAN—THE MOVIE. Within 48 hours they were talking a deal and Zito had been shown the script, the Newsom/Brancato draft. Zito said he was more or less pleased with it. But he found himself unable to work with Brancato, who reportedly behaved imperiously and was intent upon revising the script with as little input from the director as possible. Although Zito maintained a friendly dialogue with Newsom, he brought in his own writer, Barney Cohen.







Cohen's screenplays, according to Stan Lee, were less than pleasing. The version Cohen first handed in, he said, was not as good as the original. "And the next version, I liked even less," said Lee. "The scripts kept getting worse and worse. And finally I got a call I'll never forget. It was from Menachem Golan, who was in Europe. He said I shouldn't worry because he was going to rewrite the script on the plane heading back to California." Golan runs Cannon with partner Yoram Globus.

Actually, both Lee and Zito think Golan did a decent job of it. He didn't adhere to the canon—Spidey never got much play in Golan's native Tiberius, a city on the shore of Galilee in Israel, where the fearsome Sabraman, an Israeli comic book character, had the field pretty much to himself. But had Golan pitched his ideas to the Marvel crew back when the Spider-Man story was first being thrashed out, they might have been incorporated. Zito said they were "sound and wise." They just weren't Spidey.

Zito saw his own role as that of balancing the company's sense of the story with his own sense of Spider-Man. Zito had

not grown up a Spidey fan, having thrown in with D.C. comics and Superman at an early age. But a reading of the strips as an adult won him over.

"I had made tough guy movies. But here was a hero who was a real guy, like you or me," said Zito. "Spider-Man had to face the very real problems we face in the real world. He wasn't just another tough guy from some other planet who has no conflict in this world. This was not a guy who had no problem distinguishing from right and wrong. Here's a guy, rather, who was always torn between having to go off and save the world and being at

Aunt May's on time for dinner. That touches us in a real way. It taps into our fantasies but grounds us in our realities."

Zito had big plans for Spider-Man. The director had distinguished himself by adapting potentially weighty stories intentionally into action-packed comic books. Here was a chance to take a comic book and work some genuine art into it. To make a film that, he hoped, would prove enduring. And Zito managed to impart his enthusiasm for the project to Cannon. Zito had budgeted the film at \$18 million, and the company had informally announced its approval of a \$15

million budget to start.

"At one point," he said, "there was a huge sense of urgency about this project. Suddenly, it had to be made yesterday." But even as preproduction hammered ahead, Zito continued to experience conflict with the story department which, he said, insisted that the film's focus alternate between Spider-Man and his chief villain, Dr. Octopus.

"Now Doc Oc was a wonderful villain, but this was getting away from what I thought the film was all about," said Zito. "I wanted to know what was happening, dramatically, inside of Spider-Man. His physical interaction with Dr. Octopus, was, for me, the least interesting aspect of the picture."

Zito said that eventually he received a script that he felt was "spectacular." He was free to design the film. At Golan's behest, Zito spent a month in Italy checking out the studios. Golan also suggested filming Spider-Man in his native Israel but Zito demurred. He wanted to do the movie in England. "I wanted the English set designers," he said. "I liked the quasi-surrealistic look they could give to the world I wanted to

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Spiderman creator and head of Marvel Productions, Stan Lee, squares off with his comic book creation. Lee was up for the role of J. Jonah Jameson, Spidey's boss.





# ROBOCOP

**Director Paul Verhoeven's hard-hitting futuristic adventure could be the summer's sleeper hit.**

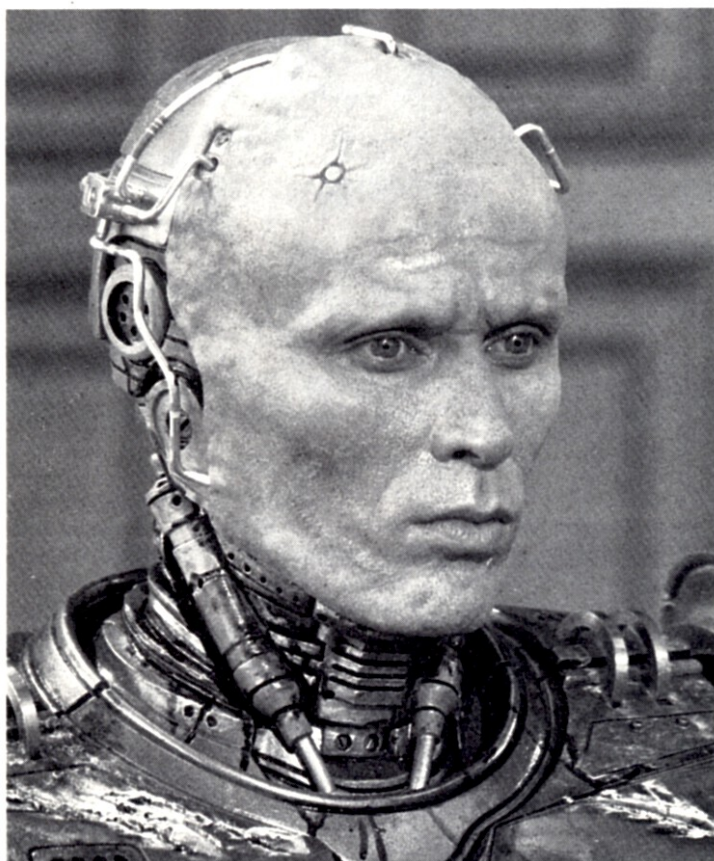
*By Dan Bates*

As **ROBOCOP** neared readiness for its July 17th release by Orion Pictures, the film created quite a stir from preview audiences subjected to the hard-core violence of Dutch director Paul Verhoeven's hard-hitting interpretation of the film's adult, new wave comic book premise. In May the film was slapped with an X-rating by the Motion Picture Association of America's Code and Rating Administration. Executive producer Jon Davison, who contractually shares the right of final cut approval with Orion, trimmed the picture with Verhoeven to get the commercially all-important R from the MPAA.

"We expected the picture to be a hard-R," said Ed Neumeir, the film's co-author and coproducer, who stressed that the film had language problems as well. "The film came out of my discovery of *adult* comic books, those that were ascerbic, more sophisticated. What Verhoeven and I were interested in doing was trying to push the limits. It's very important to me to keep an edge on this movie."

The brunt of some of the film's cruelest violence is actor Peter Weller who plays Robocop. At the beginning of the film Weller, as futuristic Detroit patrolman Murphy, is seen being gunned-down. "Leave it to Verhoeven to show you some real butchery," said Weller, during filming in Dallas, Texas. "In the scene they shoot my kneecaps off, blow my arms off, and shoot me right through the head." The violence is perpetrated by the corporation that runs Detroit, which rebuilds Murphy into a police cyborg as an experiment, a kind of ruthless *noir* version of **THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN**.

Weller, who hails from Texas and also played the title role in the offbeat **ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI**, plays Robocop in a confining, cum-



Peter Weller as Robocop, unmasked, in makeup designed by Rob Bottin.

bersome and uncomfortable metallic costume and makeup designed by Rob Bottin. The actor's training through Actors Studio lead him to "personalize" himself in the role, making lists of traits which distinguished him from Murphy or Robocop as he went along.

"This approach to character, the robot part of it, is basically a situation of working from the outside in," said Weller. "How does this person function, walk, and behave physically in *this suit*?"—that was my primary concern and the problem to be solved. It wasn't so much what the thoughts and feelings and motivations of the thing were because, for about half the film, this robot has no thoughts and feelings other than what he is programmed to do, which is a.) please the people that built him; and b.) uphold the law, serve the public trust, stop crime. The adjustment I

made was to not think and feel, just do what the director wanted me to do."

Weller's main preparation, in his view, was the four months of robotics he went through, studying with a professional mime, Moni Yakin of Juilliard, "stylizing" his movements so that they would appear computerized, mechanical, but not too mime-like. The aim was, in the end, to "have some humanity breathe through. That's been the hardest thing of all."

The physical impairments of playing Robocop were "the worst" for Weller. When in the suit's helmet his vision was severely limited to a mere two-inches. Despite all that, Weller said he had fun with the role. "I feel like a recidivist, in a way," he said. The early, extreme difficulties of putting on, moving around in, and finally taking off the Robocop suit ultimately ground themselves into Weller's psyche to such an extent that "I don't know what my life is like, if I'm not in this suit," he laughed. The early

claustrophobia, the confinement, being opened up at the end of the day with Allen wrenches—all eventually became routine. Weller had, by that stage in the filming, *become* Robocop! "If I'm in this suit, my life is in order," he said.

Echoing executive producer Davison and director Verhoeven, Weller viewed the science fiction elements of **ROBOCOP** as secondary. "Those trappings are the things that make it look fun and commercial," he said. "But what's the movie really trying to say? I don't mean necessarily that we always have to make Ingmar Bergman films all the time, but if people could come away from the movie with more than just the gratuitous high of watching a lot of action, I'd like that too."

In relying so heavily on Verhoeven's direction while in the persona of Robocop,

*continued on page 58*



# DELTA CITY

THE FUTURE HAS A  
SILVER LINING.



Director Paul Verhoeven evokes the look of new wave comics (right) as Robocop comes to the aid of a crime victim in Old Detroit. The Robocop suit is designed by Rob Bottin. Above: Bottin's makeup for Paul McCrane as Emil, one of the thugs arrayed against Robocop, who falls into a vat of toxic waste.





# HELLRAISER

**Clive Barker, British horror's man of letters, makes a strong debut as a genre film auteur.**

*By Alan Jones*

Since the decline of Hammer Films, the British horror movie has all but vanished from the marketplace. There have been a few last gasps. XTRO (12:5:13) and THE COMPANY OF WOLVES (15:1:4), for example, did extremely well at the U.K. boxoffice, but nothing to equal the universal point-of-sale acceptability conjured up by even the shoddiest Hammer product. A vague resurgence in British horror is being spearheaded by Clive Barker's HELLRAISER, released by New World Pictures August 14. With Hemdale's DEATH STAR and Palace's DREAM DEMONS waiting in the wings, HELLRAISER will be the first film in years to try and make British Gothic a viable commodity once again.

Budgeted at \$3 million, HELLRAISER marks the directing debut of acclaimed horror writer Clive Barker. Stephen King has proclaimed of Barker's fiction, "I have seen the future of the horror genre, and his name is Clive Barker." Barker can now add directing to an impressive list of accomplishments which include award-winning short story writer, (*Books of Blood* 1-6), novelist, (*The Damnation Game* and the soon to be published *Weaveworld*), illustrator, playwright, ("Frankenstein in Love" and "The Secret Life of Cartoons") and scriptwriter, (UNDERWORLD and RAWHEAD REX).



Celebrated horror author Clive Barker poses on the set of HELLRAISER, his film directorial debut.

HELLRAISER is loosely based on Barker's novella *The Hell-Bound Heart*, and stars Andy Robinson, famous for his portrayal of the psychopath in DIRTY HARRY. Robinson plays luckless Larry Cotton who moves into an old house with his wife Julia, only to find himself and his family beset by forces unknowingly released from the darkest recesses of Hell. Julia finds herself increasingly drawn to one of the rooms. When her husband accidentally cuts himself letting blood splash on the bare floor boards, it signals the arrival of his long lost brother Frank, back from the dead.

Frank explains to Julia, with whom he had a brief affair, how by solving a Chinese puzzle-box, called the Lament Configuration, he summoned four demons from the Outer Darkness. His motive was the promise of untold physical pleasure at the hands of these

spirits, the Cenobites, creatures who have dedicated an eternity to the pursuit of sensuality. But with the pleasure came pain beyond imagining. Now that Frank has fed on his brother's blood he has temporarily escaped from his Hellish captors. Only a skeletal shadow of his former self, Frank needs more blood to aid his reconstitution and he trades on Julia's past affections for help in getting the victims. Only it doesn't stop there. Frank needs one vital component . . . skin!

HELLRAISER also stars British television actors, Clare Higgins and Sean Chapman, and Ashley Laurence who appears in the American daytime soap-opera CAPITOL. The seven week shooting schedule began September 29th on North London locations with interiors filmed at the Production Village in the suburb of Cricklewood under the guidance of ex-actor, turned first-

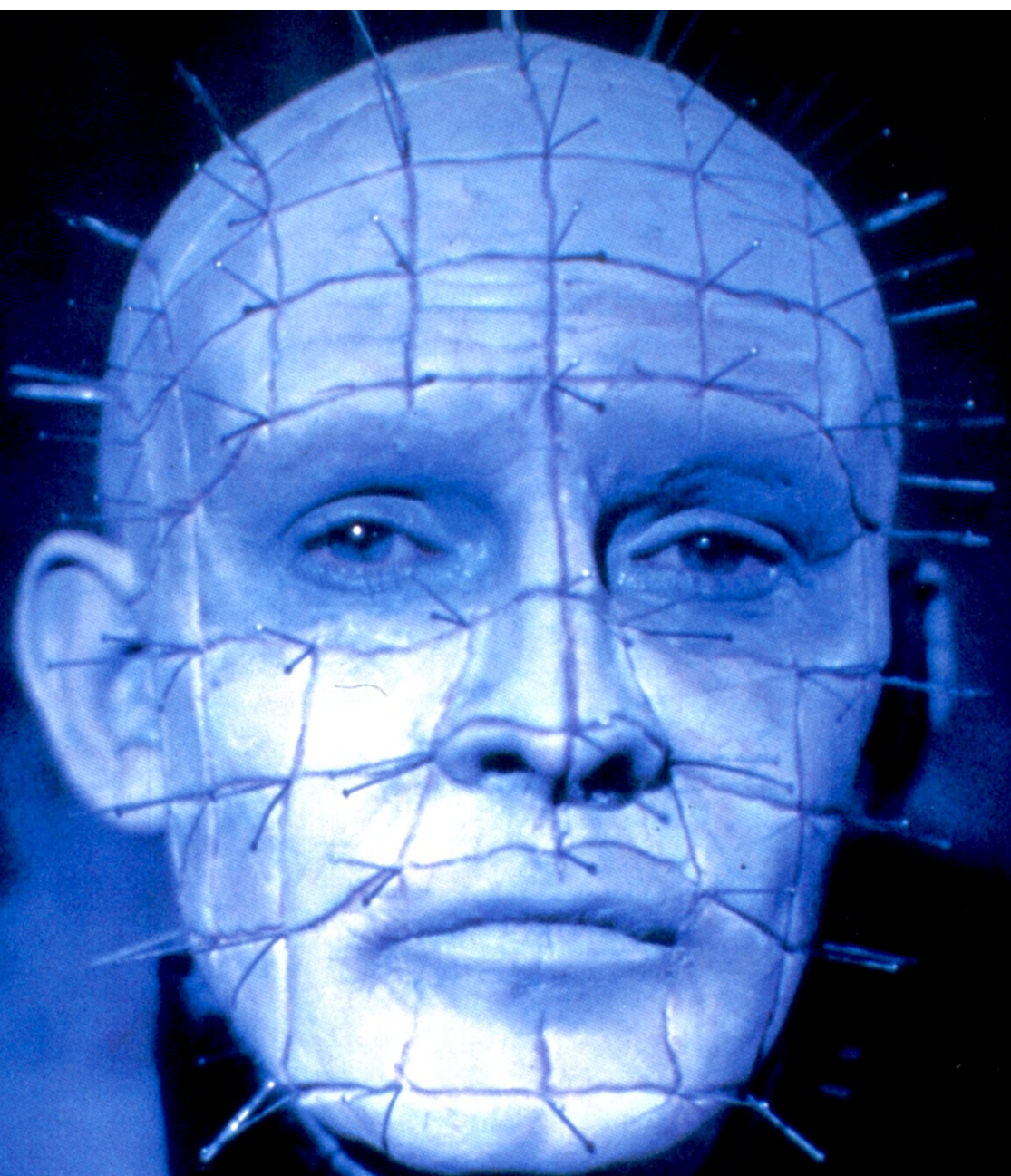
time producer, Christopher Figg. The special effects design is by Bob Keen's Image Animation company which worked on HIGH-LANDER, and created some of the creatures for ALIENS. Soundtrack music will be provided by the avant-garde group Coil.

Barker as director and his screenplay for HELLRAISER was offered as a package to financiers. "It was the script and me or nothing else," said Barker. "And nowhere was the opposite ever discussed. I'm aware I've led somewhat of a charmed life these last few years. I've

gone from 0 to 60 in three seconds!" Barker had experience directing his own plays and others. The package was snapped-up by New World Pictures as a co-production deal with Virgin Vision which dropped out during contract negotiations.

Barker said HELLRAISER is going to be heavy stuff, but not willfully so. "I'm not making a gross-out picture for the sake of it," said Barker. "But at no point have we ever said either—we musn't do that. It's not tongue-in-cheek like THE RE-ANIMATOR, where the over-the-top stuff became funny instead of scary. I have fun with those kinds of pictures but I much prefer to believe that people are intending to really scare me. And my problem with the real gross-out stuff is that there comes a point where it is no longer scary, just ridiculous. With THE RE-ANIMATOR that was inten-





**THE CENOBITES,**  
supernatural entities  
from another dimension  
devoted to the pursuit  
of pleasure and pain,  
makeups designed by  
director Clive Barker  
and realized for the  
film by Bob Keen.  
**HELLRAISER** is set to  
open on August 14.







Frank (Oliver Smith) comes back from the dead and skins the bodies of victims brought to him by his sister-in-law lover Kirsty in order to regain his human form.

tional, but with so many others it isn't, it just becomes ludicrous. My feeling is that by waiting for the right moment to let rip, a film is infinitely more effective, especially with characters you have come to like. The kind of perversities the Cenobites indulge in are singularly strange. It is very weird material, just on the limit of acceptability—I hope."

The word around the location was that Barker was going for the artsy sophisticated horror look reminiscent of Andrei Zulawsky's *POSSESSION* (12/5/6:5). But Barker finds 'artsy' rather a worrying description. "It's not an art movie it's a horror movie, but one that is going to be made with the maximum amount of intelligence and class we can muster," he said. "I want to make sure we don't make a picture that is merely functional like *THE EVIL DEAD*. By that I mean where the lighting is OK, the performances are OK, the effects are OK, but at no point do any of those departments pull out the stops and turn crap into art. We have got some extremely beautiful images in this picture. One of the things I do in my writing is, when stuff gets barbaric, the language gets very elegant. The stronger the imagery becomes, the more important it becomes to context it in a paradoxical way. That's what I'm doing here. I had a problem with *POSSES-*

*SION* because I didn't understand it although it had some lovely images."

One of the reasons why Barker decided to look for funding and the opportunity to direct a film based on his own screenplay was because of his experience on the Empire release *UNDERWORLD* (16:4/5:14). "I didn't like *UNDERWORLD* at all, although I have a lot to thank it for because it is directly responsible for me making *HELLRAISER*," said Barker. "They didn't want to make the picture I wrote. There are only seven of my lines left in the finished film. They wanted to do something about exploding cars, whereas I simply wanted to scare people. Now here we are making a film that will hopefully do the latter. I'm glad I've

got the reins because I feel I can direct my own vision, the vision that has sold my books, and get it onto the screen. The creative decisions all the way down the line are mine and that's important to me."

Barker has nothing but praise for the look of Bob Keen's special effects. Barker did the initial sketches of what he envisioned and then he and Keen thrashed out the practicalities. In the film Keen has to realize the four Cenobites—full-frontal punk zombies—Frank in various stages of cadaverous rejuvenation and the climactic guardian of Hell, known as the Engineer, which only can be described as a cross between a scorpion and a mongoloid baby.

"Nothing looks like anything anyone's ever seen mon-

sterwise before, and that's quite something," said Barker. "In the effects field, fashion moves in clumps. Something new appears, like bladder effects, and suddenly every movie has them for the next two years. What we've tried to do is make a lateral jump, not in the futuristic sense, but out of the mainstream of horror design and look at new avenues. The Cenobites don't do a zombie shamle or tear-out throats, what they do is very subtle and nothing to do with the naked aggression of a George Romero picture.

"One of the aspects that brought people to the books were that they were different from the rest," continued Barker. "Hopefully if that gets transferred to the screen people will remark that this is new as it is done with a bit more polish, panache, and sophistication, but mainly a bit more courage to scare people. *HELLRAISER* is a fast-moving, intelligent and popular horror movie, filled with demons, haunted houses and things coming back from the dead. In purest terms it's a love story from beyond the grave and it's about desire for experience beyond the flesh and what the consequences are going to be. There has been a general trend recently towards infantile horror. I don't want to soften the blows. It's time to get tough again." □

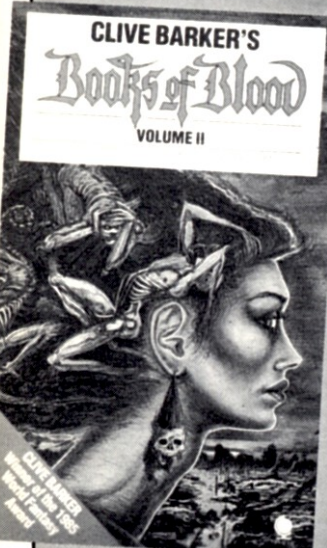
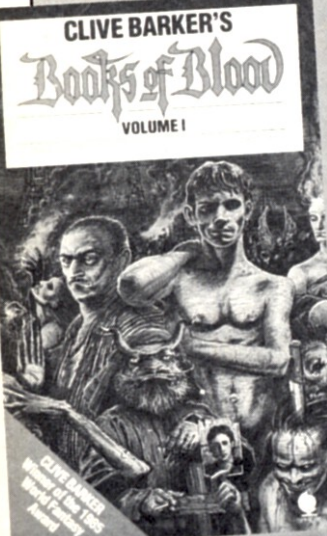
In a dream sequence, Kirsty (Ashley Lawrence) imagines one of the flayed victims.





# A LITERARY HELLRAISER

*Clive Barker's horror fiction is innovative, vivid, fast-paced, and pulls no punches in its willingness to go for the jugular.*



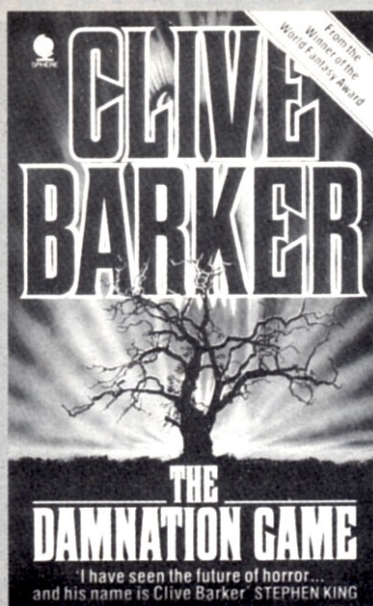
"I have seen the future of the horror genre, and his name is Clive Barker... What Barker does makes the rest of us look like we've been asleep for 10 years."

—Stephen King.

An impressive quote, and there's many, many more where that came from. Clive Barker has burst onto the horror fiction scene with more fanfare than anyone since, well, Stephen King. In a little more than two years, he's published seven books—*Books of Blood*, Volumes I–VI and *The Damnation Game*—all of which have received great critical acclaim. Those unacquainted with Barker's work might well wonder what all the fuss is about.

The exact source of Barker's popularity is hard to pinpoint, but his fresh, original ideas are a good place to start. Stories like "In The Hills, The Cities" in which two villages decide their rivalry in an altogether different fashion, and "Jacqueline Ess: Her Will And Testament," in which Ms. Ess finds the power to emancipate herself with a vengeance, are so far removed from the standard themes and clichés which predominate horror fiction that the reader can't help but be taken aback by their sheer novelty. Barker's originality certainly helps make him a favorite of many critics, but is that what makes him so attractive to the reading public as well?

Certainly creativity has something to do with his success, but a bigger factor may be his willingness to 'go for the jugular.' Barker's innovative stories are often sprinkled with liberal



The covers of Barker's first novel (above) and his series of horror short story anthologies from Britain's Sphere Books.

doses of grue and gore, and he pulls no punches when it comes to the more graphic scenes.

It so happens that Barker is a big fan of graphic Grade-B (and lower) horror films, and this fondness is reflected in his writings. A generation of viewers who've come to know and love violent and vivid horror films, replete with spectacular special effects, can find their literary equivalent in the pages of Barker's fiction.

But there's an important distinction to make between Barker's fiction and the low-budget films which he professes to admire. The difference—and it's a big one—is that none of Barker's graphic depictions of horror seem gratuitous, but rather fit neatly into the stories' framework. And, unlike the mindless victims who populate bad horror movies, the characters in Barker's stories possess depth and breadth, and never seem to exist for the sole purpose of dying. Through his writings,

Barker has taken blood and gore and imbued it with a touch of class—a bit of intellectualism, even.

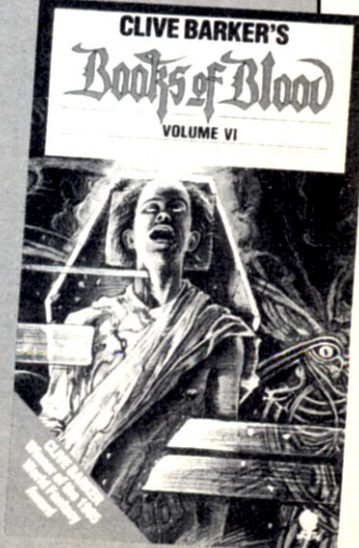
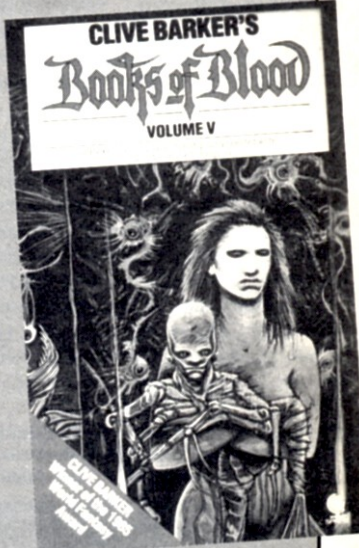
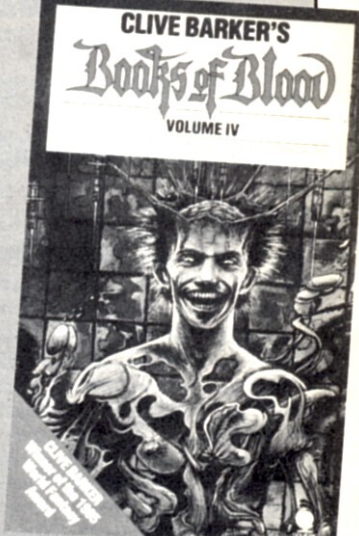
But what makes Barker think he can direct? "My mother told me!" he laughed, but added more seriously, "I had directed for the theatre. Not only my plays but others. I have a good familiarity with actors and I enjoy working with them very much. The communality fires me. It's a change of pace from writing books. Being gregarious, I enjoy that."

Barker is also confident because HELLRAISER is based on his own screenplay and he

knows the material. "I've worked it through in great detail," he said. "When an actor asks 'What's my motivation?' I know exactly what to tell them. It was my novella and it's been through many drafts as a screenplay. The narrative problems were solved a long time ago."

Barker considers himself an instinctive director. "I love horror movies so much they're a part of my system," said Barker. "I'm just winging it. I come fully prepared to the set everyday with thumbnail sketches and I take it from there."

In the final analysis, Barker combines innovative ideas, vivid imagery and solid characters into tight, fast-paced yarns, and you can't ask for much more than that. Barker's work, particularly his short stories, have changed the face of horror fiction and greatly influenced its future direction. In view of this, it's no wonder that praise has flooded over him like blood gushing from a wound. **Bob Morrish**





# COMING

## DOIN' TIME ON PLANET EARTH

*Alienated youth comedy with a cosmic twist by Charles Matthau.*

By Steve Biodrowski

Stories of alienated youth have always been popular, so perhaps it was inevitable that someone would eventually write a story about a youth who is an alien. The Cannon Group's **DOIN' TIME ON PLANET EARTH** focuses on the plight of seventeen year-old Ryan Richmond, who discovers the reason he feels so out of place in his home town is that he's actually from outer space. Ryan must decide whether to return to outer space or make the best of life here on Earth. The Golan-Globus production, which is tentatively set to open in August, stars newcomers Nicholas Strouse, Matt Adler, and Andrea Thompson, and features appearances by Adam West, Hugh O'Brien, Roddy McDowell, and Maureen Stapleton.

Unlike the majority of youth-oriented movies, **DOIN' TIME ON PLANET EARTH** has an advantage in that several key members of the crew are actually young enough to be in tune with their audience. Cannon chose Charles Matthau, the 23 year-old son of Walter Matthau to be the first beneficiary of their Young Filmmakers Program. Richard Con-

Azzara as one of the wacky ETs sports a bird's nest coiffure in the Cannon film, which is tentatively set to open August.



Charles Matthau, son of actor Walter Matthau, directs Adam West and Candice Azzara as extraterrestrials convinced an Earth boy is a lost member of their race.

nor, Matthau's associate and a fellow graduate of the University of Southern California's film program, discovered the film's script, authored by 25 year-old UCLA grad Darren Star. The script appealed to Matthau because "it had great opportunities for visual humor, but at the same time it's got some pathos. Having been an alienated teenager, as I think most of us have been, I could identify with the character."

Within two weeks, Cannon chiefs Menachem Golan and Yoram Globus gave the green light for Matthau to direct the \$27 million film, with Connor producing. "I'm very grateful to them for taking a chance on someone who had only made short films," said Matthau, who won several awards for his work at USC. "The lack of interference has been wonderful. They've been there to give guidance when I ask for it, but also allowed me free reign."

Part of Matthau's "free reign" involved directing actors who will be defying the laws of gravity during the film's comic finale, wherein a rotating restaurant spins wildly out of control, pinning the guests, mostly aliens who have come to crash a wedding, to the wall. Constructed by Reel EFX, Inc., the set for this sequence weighed 45,000 pounds, measured over 50 feet across, and spun on 56 wheels at a rate of one rotation every six seconds. Someone standing at the

outer circumference of the set travels 28 feet per second (20 mph), achieving a centrifugal force almost twice that of gravity. The actual turntable on which the set rested took four weeks to build, at a cost of over \$100,000, with an additional three weeks of construction on the stage. Because it was too large to fit through the door, the turntable had to be built in six sections, like pieces of a pie, and assembled on the stage.

Said Martin J. Becker, who founded Reel EFX along with Luis D. Lopez, "Hollywood does not build sets like this anymore! The conventional thinking was to do it blue screen. We convinced them to build a set that rotates. It's a major undertaking. If there is a problem, you can't stop 45,000 pounds quickly. It has a braking system, but it takes time."

**DOIN' TIME ON PLANET EARTH** wrapped its seven weeks of principal photography last December while Rob Blalack of Praxis completed opticals, including miniatures of the rotating Hollywood Inn Rotunda Room. Although no firm release date has been set, Matthau hoped Cannon would choose to release the film when there was no great competition from the major studios (Fall dates are a possibility). "It will need time to find its audience," he said. "It's got to come out when it can stay in a theatre three or four weeks without getting pulled." □

## NEW RELEASES

### JAWS 87 July 17

Universal. Directed by Joseph Sargent. With: Lorraine Gary, Mitchell Anderson, Lance Guest, Karen Young.

Effects nixed, see page 14.

### ROBOCOP July 17

Orion. Directed by Paul Verhoeven. With: Peter Weller, Nancy Allen, Dan O'Herlihy, Ronny Cox, Kurtwood Smith.

A sleeper hit, see page 6.

### SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS July 17

Buena Vista. Directed by David Hand. Voices: Adriana Caselotti, Harry Stockwell.

50th Anniversary re-issue.

### SUPERMAN IV July 17

Warner Bros. Directed by Sidney J. Furie. With: Christopher Reeve, Margot Kidder, Mark Pillow, Gene Hackman.

Reeve sued, see page 21.

### HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY July 24

New World. Directed by Ethan Wiley. With: Arye Gross, Royal Dano, Lar Park Lincoln, Jonathan Stark.

Sequel preview, page 38.

### MONSTER SQUAD July 24

Tri-Star. Directed by Fred Dekker. With: Andre Gower, Duncan Regher, Ashley Bank, Robbie Kiger, Michael McKay.

Nostalgic fun, page 15.

### THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS July 31

United Artists. Directed by John Glen. With: Timothy Dalton, Maryam D'Abo, Jeroen Krabbe, Joe Don Baker.

The new 007, see page 16.

### THE LOST BOYS Aug. 7

Warner Bros. Directed by Joel Schumacher. With: Kiefer Sutherland, Jason Patric, Corey Haim, Jami Gertz.

Horror dud, see page 18.

### MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE Aug. 7

Cannon. Directed by Gary Goddard. With: Dolph Lundgren, Frank Langella, Meg Foster.

Photo preview, page 40.

### HELLRAISER Aug. 14

New World. Directed by Clive Barker. With: Andy Robinson, Clare Higgins, Sean Chapman, Ashley Laurence.

Barker horror, page 8.

### DOIN' TIME ON PLANET EARTH Aug. 28

Cannon. Directed by Charles Matthau. With: Matt Adler, Candice Azzara, Hugh O'Brien, Adam West.

Alien youth, see page 12.

### PRINCESS BRIDE Sept. 9

20th Century-Fox. Directed by Rob Reiner. With: Cary Elwes, Mandy Patinkin, Chris Sarandon, Christopher Guest.

Fairy tale, see page 20.



# STAR TREK

## THE NEXT GENERATION

### The scoop on producer Gene Roddenberry's new version of his popular science fiction series.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Gene Roddenberry's new series **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION** was slated to begin production in June, a month behind schedule. The television air date for the two-hour pilot has now been moved back to October. Word from sources involved in the production indicates that despite careful budgeting by the executive accounting office at Paramount, the show can't help but go significantly over its projected budget of \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million per episode. Paramount plans to syndicate 26 episodes of the one-hour show. ILM has been hired to do the show's titles and optical effects and has begun building a new model of the Enterprise.

The pilot script is written by Roddenberry and D.C. Fontana, a former script editor and one of the preeminent writers of the original series. Roddenberry, serving as executive producer, created the new show's format and issued a writing guide to prospective script writer's which outlines the concepts and characters. Set a century after the first series' 23rd-century time frame, it involves a new Enterprise starship on a thirty-year mission.

The ship will be captained by an older officer, Dr. Julian Picard, an honored sage from the days of the original series. Paramount has cast Patrick Stewart for the part, which will function much in the fashion of Lorne Greene's 'Adama,' in **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA**, as an overseer who seldom has to beam down into the thick of things. The British-trained Royal Shakespeare company actor played minstrel Gurney Halleck in **DUNE**. The point man for the new Enterprise will be a younger captain-in-training Lieutenant William Ryker, played by Jonathan Frakes.

In a nod to the uniqueness of Leonard



Executive producer Gene Roddenberry, creator of the original **STAR TREK** and the new show, poses on the bridge of the Enterprise with some of the "old generation."

Nimoy's Spock, Roddenberry has done away with the position of science officer aboard the new ship, avoiding any comparison. As yet there are no plans for a Vulcan principal. But the series will feature an android named 'Data,' whose main aspiration is to be human, the creation of an unknown alien race.

Other characters include a hard-nosed female security officer called 'Macha,' reportedly fashioned after the woman marine played by Jenette Goldstein in **ALIENS**. In casting, this role went to Denise Crosby, the lady scientist of **THE ELIMINATORS**, and was changed to a blonde Russian named T'asha Yar. The senior medical officer Dr. Beverly Crusher is played by Cheryl McFadden. Her 15 year-old son named Lesley is played by Will Wheaton, the actor who appeared as a young Stephen King in **STANDBY ME**. A Klingon officer is also among the crew.

The Klingons, it would seem, have grown tired of knocking their heads against the Federation, and have joined them in an alliance. At present there is talk of dusting off the Romulans or establishing the "Farengi Alliance," to replace the Klingons as regular series villains.

Also cast for the show is actor Levar Burton of **ROOTS** who plays blind Lt. Jordy Leforge, who sees by means of a prosthetic device. Marina Sirtis plays the half-human/half-"Betazoid" Starfleet counselor Deanna Troi, the show's main alien character. Sirtis is outfitted with an inverted, high sloping forehead makeup appliance for the role. And Brent Spiner plays an android possessing both strength and photographic memory recall. Don't cross him.

A number of veterans from the original series are involved in the new show. Robert Justman is associate producer.

Justman was an associate producer, then co-producer, of the original series, who is said to be intent upon sticking close to the precedents set by the original show. David Gerrold was hired as story editor, but said he was leaving the show in May to work on his own network mini-series. The show's original costume designer, William Ware Theiss was brought on board instead of Robert Fletcher, who produced the costumes for the feature films.

None of the cast of the original series is slated to appear, even in a guest-star capacity. Walter Koenig, nee Chekhov, had pitched a script idea which had a planet issue a distress call and insist upon receiving assistance from the old Enterprise principals. Those still alive because of the wonders of 24th century geriatrics would have been called out of their nursing homes to render rescue. Reportedly Para-

continued on page 60



# JAWS: THE REVENGE

*Stop-motion shark by Ted Rae abandoned by a harried production.*

By Steve Biodrowski

Ted Rae, who provided the animated shark that appears in *JAWS 3-D*, was hired by Universal to film a stop-motion shark for their new sequel *JAWS: THE REVENGE*. Rae and his Little Buddy Productions got the job after he read the announcement in the October 28 issue of *Hollywood Reporter* for the film. "I just called up director Joseph Sargent's office and said, 'Look, I don't know how you go about this, but I worked on the last movie; we did some good stuff; and I think we can help you.' They said, 'Fine, come on in.'"

Sargent needed all the help he could get. When Universal chief Sid Sheinberg had the brainstorm last September to do another sequel, Sargent took the bait and vowed to have it ready to open in theatres July 3, taking just nine months to make it from scratch. Most industry observers regarded doing the film on such a short schedule as an almost impossible task. The studio is now aiming for a July 17th opening.

During preproduction, serious consideration had been given to having ILM build a miniature, free-swimming shark similar to the whales used in *STAR TREK IV*, but that approach had its limitations. "We were talking about having a shark in the same scene following a character," said Rae. "Other than a few isolated shots in *ORCA*, I've never seen anything like that—I mean, nobody's crazy



The mechanical shark in *JAWS 3-D* was successfully doubled by a stop-motion shark built by animation effects expert Ted Rae.

enough to get in the water with a real Great White!"

Rae was assisted by two technicians who worked at ILM on the whales for *STAR TREK IV*; his partner in Little Buddy Productions, Tim Lawrence, who had worked on plastics research and mold systems; and Peter Folkens, an ichthyologist who came up with a composite drawing based on measurements from three great white sharks. Since Rae's shark had to match both the full-scale mechanical shark built for the film by Henry Millar and live shark footage considered for use, he tried to strike a happy medium in his sculpture.

Though Rae's model was approved his shots were later nixed by the production because they didn't match the mechanical shark. "That's because the production's mechanical shark looks like a concrete log with teeth," said Rae with some rancor. "It's lumpy

and doesn't look as good as the shark in the first film." Sargent has also reportedly decided to drop the live shark footage as well for the same reason, though "It was good enough for Steven Spielberg," said Rae. The animated puppets were to appear in three or four shots, including one which featured the shark attacking a miniature submarine.

Rae was also to supply a mechanical shark puppet, along with a miniature boat, to be featured in a shot which Rae described as a *tour de force* for the film's

climax. Operated on a cable-drive system designed by Lawrence, the mechanical version will simulate the death spasms of the shark as it sinks to the ocean depths. Rae modified the model to make it look more like the production's full size mechanical.

Rae filmed the shot dry for wet using smoke for diffusion, with a camera pointing straight up to the shark mounted on a rod that ascended to the roof. Rae dumped small plastic beads for bubbles and red tempera powder for blood, which was to be seen floating to the surface in an overhead shot. But when Sargent saw Rae's early tests he pulled the plug on the shot because he didn't want any diffusion and took Rae's models over to Universal to be filmed in a water tank.

"The production was so far behind it was like pulling teeth to get answers out of anybody," said Rae. "I was almost operating in a vacuum, making stuff up and hoping they would like it. They got caught up in trying to make a movie in nine months that should have had eighteen months." Bad weather in the Bahamas reportedly put the production behind schedule.

Despite the setbacks which prevented Rae from making as big a contribution as he would like, the effects expert is hoping director Joseph Sargent will be able to pull the film together. "COLOSSUS, THE FORBIN PROJECT and TAKING OF PELHAM 1-2-3 are both terrific films," said Rae. "I thought, finally a really good character director is going to make a *JAWS* film." □

## WILLOW

RON HOWARD DIRECTS  
BIG-BUDGET FANTASY  
FOR LUCASFILM

Alan Ladd, Jr., who backed George Lucas at 20th Century-Fox on *STAR WARS*, as chairman of MGM has put his studio behind Lucasfilm's \$30 million production of *WILLOW*. The quest fantasy set in 2500 B.C., about a band of trolls, is being directed by Ron Howard at England's Elstree Studios. The film stars Jean Marsh, Val Kilmer and midget Billy Barty with special effects by ILM and makeup by Nick Dudman, who designed the Emperor in *RETURN OF THE JEDI*. MGM plans to release the film May 28, 1988.

## APT PUPIL

NEW STEPHEN KING  
ADAPTATION SET TO  
FILM MID-JULY

Richard Kobritz, producer of *CHRISTINE* (one of the few Stephen King movies to turn a profit lately) is filming an adaptation of "Apt Pupil," a novella from King's non-horror book *Different Seasons*. The contemporary suspense melodrama about a teenage boy who discovers a fugitive Nazi death camp officer living anonymously in Southern California, starts shooting July 13.

Kobritz, who supervised the making of *SALEM'S LOT* while an executive at Warner Bros television, is co-producing *APT PUPIL* independently as a feature. His partner is William Frye, a veteran Hollywood producer whose best-known genre credit is the Boris Karloff TV series *THRILLER*. *APT PUPIL*'s budget is \$5.5 million, provided by Granat Entertainment. Nichol Williamson plays the Nazi, and Alan Bridges (*THE SHOOTING PARTY*) is directing the script by Ken & Jim Wheat.

"It's as atypical Stephen King as you can get," said Kobritz. "It deals primarily in psychological horror. It is more akin to *THE SERVANT*, *REPULSION*, or *TAXI DRIVER*. The monster is real, there are no special effects; it's a study of corruption."

Bill Kelley

Ted Rae sculpts the anatomically correct shark model used in *JAWS 3-D*.





# THE MONSTER SQUAD

**A mythic team-up of Our Gang kids with Universal monsters of yore by director Fred Dekker.**

*By Les Paul Robley*

Young filmmakers are usually told to avoid three things as directors: kids, animals, and special effects. Fred Dekker, director of the SF spoof *NIGHT OF THE CREEPS*, had to contend with, not one, but all three problems in his latest picture, *THE MONSTER SQUAD*, due for release in August from Tri-Star Pictures. Though the film contains some fairly grisly effects, Dekker hopes its sweet spirit will soften the hearts of the ratings board enough to award it a PG-13, calling it "a cross between *STAND BY ME* and *GHOSTBUSTERS*."

The germ of the idea for the film, produced by Peter Hyams, may have started way back in the sixties, when Bill Cosby released his classic "9th Street Bridge" routine on the "Revenge" album. *THE MONSTER SQUAD* can be thought of as the movie Cosby referred

to in his skit where all the famous monsters of filmland got together for one big scary fling. It took more than 20 years for that money-making idea to finally emerge in script form.

"I had the idea to do *OUR GANG* meets the old Universal monsters," said Dekker, who shot the \$13.5 million production in fifty days. "I felt we hadn't really seen those monsters in a real movie since *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* in 1948. The more I thought about it the more I was intrigued by the kids and the concept of doing something that was very sweet and heartfelt and sincere—along the lines of *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* or *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER*, but in a genre sort of way. I'd always wanted to set the film in the South and wanted to portray that sense of mystery when you're a kid."

Dekker met up-and-coming

*Dracula* (Duncan Regher), *The Mummy* (Michael McKay) and *The Wolf Man*, designs by Stan Winston inspired by the makeup of Universal artist Jack Pierce.



Phoebe (Ashley Bank) brings Frankenstein to the aid of *THE MONSTER SQUAD*.

writer/actor Shane Black while in college, and the two immediately become friends. Black wrote the first draft of *THE MONSTER SQUAD*, then Dekker cleaned it up and made most of the revisions. The plot will bring back fond memories to any reader who has ever dreamt of spending the night in a haunted house or lonely graveyard. Like us, the group of kids who make up a club called the Monster Squad think of monsters as their lives. They spend all their time in a tree house quizzing each other on monster lore or reading back issues of *Cinefantastique*. Horror movie posters and stills decorate the walls of their clubhouse. The kids range in age from 5 to 15. Sean, the leader, is played by Andre Gower. And like the *OUR GANG* kids they have a dog mascot (this one sans bullseye).

Originally Dekker wanted to recreate the original designs Jack Pierce created for the old Universal horror films. Though the monsters are all in the public domain (except for the Creature), the studio's makeup designs are not. So Dekker took his script to Universal initially, and was turned down. When producer Peter Hyams

found backing at Taft/Barish Productions, Dekker and makeup designer Stan Winston devised creatures for the film that recalled the old Universal horrors without getting anyone in legal hot water.

Over the years, Universal has used the monsters for fairly cheezy purposes to promote their studio tour—having them do things that would make

*continued on page 53*

The film's creature from a black lagoon.





## DEMONS 2

*Another Italian gore fest from Dario Argento and Lamberto Bava.*

By Giuseppe Salza

On the heels of their successful collaboration on *DEMONS* last year, producer Dario Argento and director Lamberto Bava teamed again last summer to make a sequel. With a broad Italian release last October, *DEMONS 2* proved to be even more of a commercial success than the first chapter. The film has been picked-up for release in the U.S. by Imperial Entertainment and stars top model David Knight, Nancy Brilli, and Bobby Rhodes. Bava himself has a small speaking role and Asia Argento, the youngest daughter of the producer, also makes her motion picture debut.

In the original film a once abandoned movie theatre brought forth gruesome ghouls, to prey on its unsuspecting audience. This time the danger comes from television. Otherwise, the plot remains basically the same. "Next time the monsters might come out from the newspapers!" laughed Bava. The screenplay by Argento, Bava, Franco Ferrini, and Dardano Sacchetti is set in a high-tech high rise in West Berlin. A young girl who's celebrating her birthday gets infected by a demon which emerges from her TV. Soon most of the tenants are contaminated. When a sudden blackout blocks all the exits, a small group of survivors is

A contaminated tenant of a high rise apartment building begins to transform, makeup design by Rosario Prestopino.



Nancy Brilli is terrorized by a creature designed by Sergio Stivaletti in *DEMONS 2*. This time the demons emerge from television sets rather than from a movie screen.

forced to fight off the oncoming monsters.

Lamberto Bava was quick to say that *DEMONS 2* is not a rip-off of David Cronenberg's *VIDEODROME*. It actually sounds more akin to Cronenberg's first film, *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN*, a horror film set in a Toronto high rise apartment. "I made this picture because I still had a few ideas left," said Bava. "There were some concepts I hadn't explored in the first chapter. For example, I wanted to show how painful was the mutation process in becoming a demon. Also, I wanted to top myself." According to Bava, the story isn't intended as a criticism of television. "I like TV," he said. "You can make movies with backing from a network."

Bava was approached to make the sequel as soon as foreign sales and domestic rentals of *DEMONS* proved it was a real moneymaker. A budget slightly higher than the original film's was raised between Argento's production company DacFilm and Titanus. Filming took place last July at Rome's DePaolis studios. A week filming locations in West Berlin completed principal photography.

As in the first picture, special makeup effects provide the best thrills in *DEMONS 2*. Rosario Prestopino supervised special makeup and provided gore effects. Sergio Stivaletti (*CREEPERS* and *DEMONS*) designed the creatures and the major transformations. The film features an excel-

lent "teenager-to-ghoul" mutation requiring a mechanical arm and a foam latex head complete with teeth that fall out to be replaced by growing fangs. Stivaletti also created a troll-like demon that bursts forth from the body of a young boy. Five versions of the creature were built, one entirely radio-controlled and used mostly for close-ups. For the chest-bursting, Stivaletti used a polyurethane body.

Makeup artist Rosario Prestopino devised the film's many gore effects, including bullet impacts, graphic stabbings and throat slashings. Despite the realism of several of the effects scenes, *DEMONS 2* doesn't dwell on the blood and gore as much as the first film did, which was released in the U.S. sans rating. Some graphic scenes were cut during editing in order to make the picture mild enough for selected foreign markets. And the ending itself was radically changed during production.

In the final version of *DEMONS 2* a pregnant girl gives birth to a perfectly normal baby. "The original ending was different," said Bava. "The woman gave birth to a normal baby, and then it suddenly became a demon. We thought this twist was too pessimistic. I like the ending as it is now."

As is usual for Dario Argento's productions, *DEMONS 2* features a Dolby Stereo hard rock soundtrack. Music is by Simon Boswell, with additional songs by The Cult, The Smiths, Art of Noise, Peter Murphy, and Dead Can Dance. □

## LIVING DAYLIGHTS

TIMOTHY DALTON AS NEW 007 BREAKS IN A NEW MISS MONEYPENNY

MGM/UA is making a big promotional push to sell star Timothy Dalton to the public as the new James Bond in *THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS*, which opens July 31st. A lot of boxoffice coin is at stake for the latest entry in what the studio calls "the most successful series in the history of motion pictures." The first time the series switched actors in the role (from Sean Connery to George Lazenby) the public rejected the choice and attendance suffered.

*THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS* is the fifteenth entry in the Bond series, and while none of the films have matched the stellar grosses of the *STAR WARS* series, the producers estimate over one and a half billion paid admissions for the films since 1962, nearly a third of the world's population. That's an astounding figure when you consider



New 007 Timothy Dalton

that the 007 films haven't been screened behind the Iron Curtain or in Red China.

Though the studio is hyping the switch in Bond actors they've been embarrassed by another switch among the series' regulars. Actress Lois Maxwell who plays Miss Moneypenny, the only performer to appear in all the films, was dropped for being too old to play the secret service secretary who trades sexual inuendos with Bond. Maxwell has protested the decision and gained fan support. □



# RUNNING MAN

**Arnold Schwarzenegger stars in this futuristic action tale based on a novel by Stephen King.**

*By Dan Scapperotti*

Production began on **THE RUNNING MAN** last September for Taft/Barish Productions and immediately ran into problems (17:1:6). The producers were unhappy with director George Pan Cosmatos (**RAMBO**) and two weeks into filming he was replaced by Paul Michael Glaser. The film's screenplay is based on the science fiction novella written by Stephen King under his Richard Bachman pseudonym.

Glaser calls it "a minimalistic, futuristic action film." The story is set in Los Angeles 40 years after a killer earthquake has devastated the city, in a society run by big corporations and the media. "When I first came on board and looked at what I had to work with, I thought to myself, this is bizarre," said Glaser. "It's like doing a commercial version of **BRAZIL** attached to **NETWORK**." Tri-Star considered a late summer release, but now plans to open the film in December.

Arnold Schwarzenegger stars as Richards, a former cop framed for a mass murder, a role originally essayed by Christopher Reeve before production was shut down. Richards breaks out of prison with a pair of fellow convicts, Laughlin (Yaphet Kotto) and Weiss (Marvin J. McIntyre). In **THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME** meets high-tech storyline Richard Dawson plays the host of a TV game show on which convicted felons are the contestants called "Runners." The prizes are suspended sentences or full pardons. The losers

don't get a second chance. The Runners are pursued by Stalkers, super-athletes, using futuristic weapons.

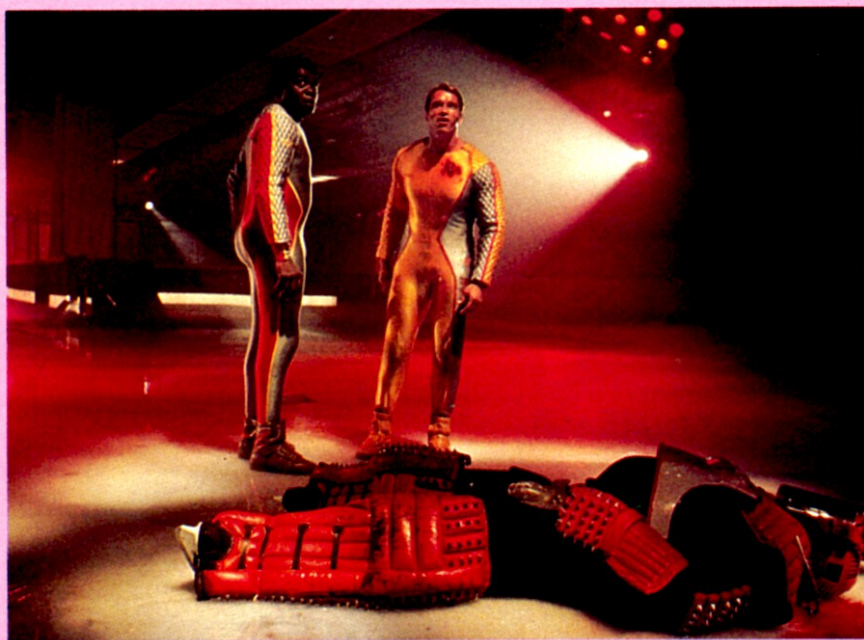
Among the Stalkers are Subzero, who uses razor sharp hockey sticks and exploding pucks; Dynamo, whose main weapon is deadly electrical charges; Buzzsaw, a chainsaw-wielding butcher; and Fireball, whose napalm fists spell fiery doom. The slipping ratings of the game show, devised as a Roman circus to keep the populace diverted, makes host Dawson desperate to find an opponent worthy of the Stalkers. He decides that Schwarzenegger is the answer.

The film's action calls for some grisly death scenes and Glaser said he doesn't want to pull his punches. "You want to deliver each particular weapon in the most emphatic way possible," he said. "Some of them have been toned-down and some of them have been toned-up." Glaser said he changed

several aspects of the production to tie up loose ends and fit the action scenes into the available schedule and budget.

Former Taft/Barish executive producer Rob Cohen and producer Ted Zinneman gave Glaser only two days to prepare before he had to begin shooting. "With two days you only have time to look at the locations for next week and reread the script a couple of times."

Glaser made his mark as an actor, playing Starsky on the popular **STARSKY AND HUTCH** TV show, which led to directing several of the episodes. "I had toyed with directing in graduate school," said Glaser. "When I did my television series I found it was the only way to avoid boredom, so I actively began pursuing the directing." Glaser admitted that being one of the stars of a popular series gave him the clout to move into directing. But that leverage disappeared



Runners Yaphet Kotto and Arnold Schwarzenegger after their defeat of Subzero, a Stalker assigned to kill them on a televised gameshow of the future. Tri-Star has put off the film's release to December.

with the end of the series. "Thereafter I had a shallow period of six years where no one in town wanted to give me a shot. It's like everything else, you have to be persistent and keep at it." Glaser's break came from Michael Mann the director of **THE KEEP**, who used Glaser to direct several episodes of Mann's popular **MI-AMI VICE** TV show as well as the feature **BAND OF THE HAND**.

To get a grasp on the production without being inundated by a deluge of details, Glaser told co-workers on **THE RUNNING MAN** to feed him information in small doses. Glaser resumed filming and began

to assimilate important facts about the production at the same time, during the first seven weeks of night shooting. "This gave me an advantage," said Glaser of the night scheduling. "I'd finish at 7 a.m., then sleep four or five hours, and get up to prep in the afternoon. I had pretty long days."

Glaser said he maintained his 61-day shooting schedule despite the obvious problems in taking over for another director. Much of the filming took place in Fontana, California near Palm Springs. The location provided an old Kaiser Steel mill that sat on 1,500 acres. The plant, which is currently being disembowled by the Japanese, served as the prison in the opening scenes and as the lethal Game Zone.

"Directing is basically problem solving," said Glaser. "When you come into something in the middle like I did, your problem solving goes up about 300%." □



# The Lost Boys

**Punk vampires prove bloodless in preview screenings designed to attract a youth audience.**

*By Patrick Hobby &  
Judith P. Harris*

Billed by Warner Bros as "stylish, comedy-horror," *THE LOST BOYS* is directed by Joel Schumacher (*ST. ELMO'S FIRE*) and opens August 7. The production reunites director Richard Donner acting as executive producer under his Richard Donner Productions banner, with producer Harvey Bernhard, who teamed with Donner on *THE OMEN*, *THE GOONIES* and *LADYHAWKE*.

On March 5, more than five months prior to its scheduled release, Warner Bros unveiled the film in rough cut form at simultaneous screenings held in Los Angeles and New York. Several hundred teenagers, many dressed in punk fashion similar to those on-screen, were recruited for the audience. Select members of the media were also in attendance. Response was positive with the strongest reactions stemming from an exciting, well-choreographed *FRIGHT NIGHT*-finale complete with multiple stakings and a double-whammy twist.

Aimed at contemporary teens, who probably don't know any vampire lore, *THE LOST BOYS* makes up its own rules in telling its story of ageless teen vampires who prey on the California beach community of Santa Carla. The concepts are poorly set forth via a vampire comic book. Irritating is an absence of special effects until the finale. Most of the vampire sequences are implied rather than shown, via point-of-view camera angles and loud whooshing sound effects. When the makeup sequence finally arrives, it is too little too late.

The screenplay, originally penned by Janice Fischer and James Jeremias and later revised by Jeffrey Boam (*THE DEAD ZONE*), suffuses standard elements of vampirism with the contempor-



Punk vampires (l to r) Brooke McCarter, Chance Michael Corbitt (front), Billy Wirth, Kiefer Sutherland, Jami Gertz, and Alex Winter. *Bram Stoker* comes to MTV in this Richard Donner production to be released by Warner Bros on August 7.

ary youth sensibilities of today's MTV generation toward which the picture is obviously geared.

Kiefer Sutherland (*STAND BY ME*) heads the cast as the charismatic leader of the teen bloodsuckers. Jason Patric and Corey Haim are the innocent new kids in town who become involved with the mysterious, supremely confident band of youths. Jami Gertz (*SOLARBABIES*) co-stars as the toothy love interest who only has eyes (and fangs) for Patric. The film is surprisingly derivative of two sequences from Tobe Hooper's *SALEM'S LOT*, notably when Haim's brother Patric floats menacingly outside his window, and later when vampire Sutherland is killed by being impaled on a wall full of antlers.

Heading the adult cast is Dianne Wiest (fresh from winning an Oscar for *HANNAH AND HER SISTERS*) who plays the recently divorced mother beginning a new life with her two sons in Santa Carla.

Edward Herrmann co-stars as Wiest's new beau and Barnard Hughes heads up the comic relief department as the quirky, cantankerous grandfather.

To depict the climactic battle and the supernatural power of *THE LOST BOYS*, a variety of visual effects sequences were provided by Dream Quest, Inc. (Richard Edlund's Boss Film was originally slated to provide the elaborate flying effects until relations between Edlund and the director became strained, said one Boss Film employee.) According to Dream Quest's visual coordinator Eric Brevig, Schumacher posed some interesting challenges. "For example, he wanted the youthful vampires to fly around at great speeds, then stop abruptly in mid-air without slowing down," said Brevig. Special makeup effects are being provided by Greg Cannom, fresh from last year's other vampire comedy, *VAMP*.

To further draw-in the intended youth audience, *THE LOST BOYS* features a soundtrack crowded with music performed by many of today's top rock artists, including Lou Gramm, Roger Daltrey and INXS and Jimmy Barnes. Ray Manzerek, keyboardist of The Doors, has produced a new version of "People Are Strange," one of the group's many hits, which will be performed for the film by England's Echo and the Bunnymen. Thomas Newman provides incidental music combining such traditional elements as pipe organ and boys choir with electronic music. Said director Joel Schumacher, "It's the Gregorian chant meeting up with the '80s, joining some of the eerie, religious-sounding music found in classic horror films with a driving rock 'n' roll sound."

In the end, horror films must be judged on whether they are frightening. The audience at the preview screenings is actually far scarier than anything in the film. □





Henri Kingi as "The Shell," a cyborg heading to the stars in a four hour TV movie to debut as a two-parter on ABC's Disney Sunday Movie in the Fall.

## EARTH STAR VOYAGER

DISNEY'S BIG BUDGET 4-HOUR TV MOVIE

By Robin Brunet

Disney execs are eager to tout EARTH STAR VOYAGER, a four-hour miniseries scheduled to kick off year two of the Disney Sunday Movie in November, as the most ambitious live-action film the company has yet made. Similar claims were made on behalf of THE BLACK HOLE eight years ago, and while the new film's storyline is undeniably set in the Disney-mold—specifically the television mold—great care has been taken in the writing to avoid the pitfalls of that earlier, lamented opus.

James Goldstone, veteran director of THE OUTER LIMITS and the second STAR TREK pilot, guided the project through its summer filming. John DeCuir (GHOSTBUSTERS, TOP GUN) was brought in to design Voyager's particular brand of outer space intrigue; and Greg Van Der Veer (SUPERMAN IV) was to handle a series of simple but effective optical chores. (Van Der Veer was replaced by Boss Films in May).

The plot, as Goldstone admitted on the Vancouver set, is nothing new. When Earth's resources start dwindling in the year 2087, a specially selected crew of youngsters is assembled for a long journey that will take them through dangerous and uncharted space to find a "new world" to colonize. The mission is in jeopardy from the outset when the senior com-

mander mysteriously disappears and sabotage is suspected. The crew decides to go against the odds and continue, knowing that their chances of survival are slim.

Science fiction quest films have become artistic anathema due to misfires like BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, so the success of EARTH STAR VOYAGER depends largely on Goldstone. He signed onto the project with the understanding that he supervise a third script rewrite and had a strong say in the "look" of the film itself.

"I liked the initial idea of Voyager," he said. "The cast is very young, of course, but I'm not treating it as a kiddie show. I'm trying to examine how each character is forced, through external circumstances, to come of age. Likewise, I'm attracted to the undercurrent theme of ecology in the final script. I've just seen STAR TREK IV and thought it was a wonderfully done film, with the ecology idea treated as a joke."

Vancouver's abandoned Expo '86 site was chosen to house Voyager's sets and serve as a setting itself for other planets. Vancouver has become a regular production base for the Disney Sunday Movie due to the efficiency of local crews and the devalued Canadian dollar, but Disney execs had long been negotiating for Expo as a home to stretch the budget for this project. □

## ROBOT HOLOCAUST

Post-holocaust science fiction low-budgeter filmed in New York for home video release.

By Dan Scapperotti

The latest direct-to-home video low-budgeter from writer/director Tim Kincaid's Tycin Films is a science fiction epic in the Flash Gordon tradition (swords vs. ray guns). Produced for Empire Pictures, the tapes hit stores last January.

Kincaid's penchant for building stories around big and inexpensive locations led him to the legendary, now abandoned, Brooklyn Navy Yard where most of the film was shot. The terminal's vast power station had been built in the 1930's, with giant wheels, 8 to 10 feet in diameter, and old pressure gauges with oversized dials reminiscent of a '30s science fiction look. Kincaid also shot on Roosevelt Island in the East River, which is dotted with abandoned structures that enabled the filmmaker to frame his cast among destroyed buildings and still have the Manhattan skyline in the background.

"I wanted to do something different from all the Italian post-nuclear pictures," said Kincaid. "I ran a Mario Bava picture called PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES for everybody, including the art department and the cameraman. I told them that this is the kind of look I wanted, saturated with colors. Arthur Marks, the director of photography said it was like making a movie with Crayolas."

Kincaid's post-nuclear landscape is populated by irradiated humans, transbots, guardbots, freebots, air slaves, the beast of the web, the Dark One, sewage worms

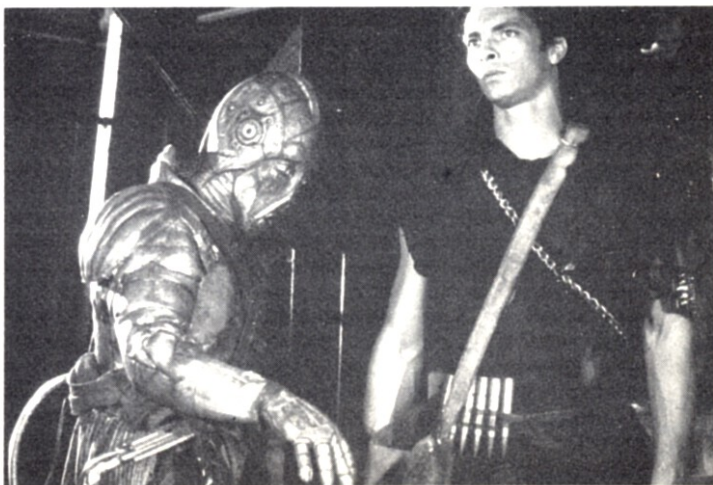


Synthetic flesh burned away reveals Angelika Jager as a robot underneath, makeup designed by Ed French.

and surveillance drones. A tall order for a film shot in fifteen days and on a low budget. Only five sets were built, all at the power station.

The film is the first of a series Kincaid hopes to set on post-nuclear New Terra with a continuing cast of characters, if sales figures from Empire are strong. "These won't be Mad Max kind of stories," he said. "We're after much more teen-oriented action, with fantasy and adventure. We might even set the next one in outer space, on an old space station." □

Joel Von Orsteiner as the friendly robot Klyton and Norris Culf fight droid tyranny.





# TARNSMAN OF GOR

*John Norman's sub par science fiction series gets filmed by Cannon.*

By Nancy Garcia

Cannon Films unveiled GOR in the market section of the Cannes Film Festival in May. The film is the first in a series to be based on the lackluster science fiction books by John Norman, an Edgar Rice Burroughs-like saga of 24 novels set on the planet Gor, a counter-Earth located on the opposite side of the sun. In a review from Cannes, *Variety* described the film as having "dialogue the depth of comic book jargon and action scenes that are choreographed to avoid realism," noting that the production "should be limited to home vid and TV outlets as filler." Cannon cancelled a planned theatrical release for the film in September and a spokesman for the company said that no other release date has been set.

The film, shot on location in Africa, is based on *Tarnsman of Gor*, Norman's first book in the series, published in 1966, and stars Italian Urbano Barberini as Tarl Cabot, an unsuspecting professor who is suddenly kidnapped and transported to the planet Gor, a world with a curious mixture of modern and primitive technology run by all-powerful Priest-Kings. (In the film, Cabot is transported to Gor after crashing his car into a tree!) The Priest-Kings of Gor have enslaved their planet in feudal barbarism while they use their advanced knowledge of science to mask its detection from Earth's instruments. Once set down in this pseudo-barbarian world, Cabot of course becomes the greatest hero on the planet, winning battles and fending off women who throw themselves at his feet.

The film also stars Oliver Reed as Sarm, one of the evil Priest-Kings, and features Jack Palance in a cameo as Xenos, setting up the character as the villain of a planned sequel, *OUTLAW OF GOR*.

*Variety* in their review termed



Above: The cover of Norman's first book in the series, published by Ballentine Books in 1966, showing hero Tarl Cabot and his avian steed. Below: Urbano Barberini (left) as Cabot from the Cannon film, called simply GOR, Paul L. Smith (center) as Surbus, and Oliver Reed as Sarm.



the film "sword and sorcery," indicating that budgetary limitations have stripped the production of the books' science fiction trappings, reducing it to a series of fight scenes with swords and crossbows set in a desert never-never land. In the books, Cabot is a *tarnsman* on Gor, who rides into battle astride the planet's giant fighting birds called *tarns*, just one of the many key elements of the novels that the low-budget Cannon production couldn't afford.

Produced by Harry Alan Towers, who launched the ill-fated, low-budget *Fu Manchu* film series starring Christopher Lee, GOR was directed by Fritz Kiersch, who made the disap-

pointing movie version of Stephen King's *CHILDREN OF THE CORN*. The screenplay for GOR is credited to Rick Marx and Peter Welbeck (a pseudonym for Towers).

The Norman books are an odd choice for a film series. Though seemingly popular, with over six million copies in print, the novels are pedestrian and lack narrative drive. Actually penned by John Lange, Jr., a professor of philosophy at Queens College in New York, the books seem mostly designed to act as a wordy discourse on Lange's peculiar and degrading image of women. "On Gor women are free to be women, whereas on Earth they are forced to try to be men," Lange has hero Tarl Cabot say in the books. The idea that women can only be happy when they are totally submissive to men runs through the series and has earned the author lots of criticism. Most recently British SF author Michael Moorcock led a campaign to have the *Gor* books banned from the shelves in Great Britain.

In the *Gor* novels men are all fierce, brave warriors with bulging muscles and women are mostly love-slaves who parade around in scanty costumes that more often than not include a slave collar and manacles. In the Cannon film, Rebecca Ferratti, formerly *Playboy* magazine's Miss June of 1986, plays Talena, a beautiful barbarian princess who, unlike in the books, fights alongside of Cabot. Per *Variety* however, the film is still full of "pastiche erotica," with Ferratti "wearing a two piece costume designed to emphasize her charms."

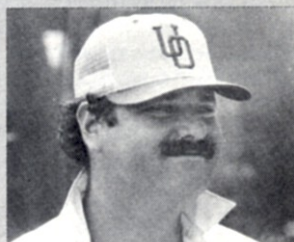
Producer Harry Alan Towers, who dabbled in soft-core pornography long before it became commonplace (with a topless scene in his 1966 *BRIDES OF FU MANCHU*), seems to have captured the essence of the Norman series despite all the changes. Full of vague, half-formed notions about sex and high adventure, the books read like a boy's wet dream. □

## PRINCESS BRIDE

ROB REINER FILMS  
FAIRY TALE FANTASY  
BY WILLIAM GOLDMAN

The latest film from director Rob Reiner, is *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*, a swash-buckling adventure with fantasy overtones written by two-time Oscar-winner William Goldman. Based on his own novel, Goldman's script—a pricey project—went unproduced for years due to its high cost. Reiner was fond of the script which had made the rounds in Hollywood and his recent hit *STAND BY ME* gave him the clout to get it made. 20th Century-Fox has tentatively post-poned release from July 31 until late September to give the project careful handling.

The film is a production of Norman Lear's Act III company, which made *STAND BY ME*. Lear produced *ALL IN THE FAMILY* for television, the hit series on which Reiner first made his mark as an actor, playing Meathead,



Director Rob Reiner

Archie Bunker's son-in-law and comedic foil. Reiner shot the film at England's Lee Shepperton Studios and at medieval castles that stand as monuments in the rural countryside.

A framing story has grandfather Peter Falk read the fairy tale to grandson Fred Savage (*THE BOY WHO COULD FLY*). Cary Elwes plays an adventurer who seeks to reclaim the woman he loves (Robin Wright) after she is kidnapped by an unscrupulous prince, played by Chris Sarandon, the vampire of *FRIGHT NIGHT*. French wrestler Andre the Giant plays a dull-witted, good-hearted giant and *RUNNING SCARED*'s Billy Crystal appears as a jaded wizard. Effects work is by Oscar-winner Nick Allder. □



# SUPERMAN IV

## Writers sue Christopher Reeve for flying off with script ideas.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Truth, justice, and the American Way were sorely tested last May when screenwriter Barry Taff lost his California Supreme Court bid for a preliminary injunction against actor Christopher Reeve, Warner Bros., and producer Cannon Films for having allegedly misappropriated his and Kenneth Stoller's story treatment for SUPERMAN IV. The idea had been to stop the film's July 17 release by Warner Bros.

The judge in the case ruled that there was no question that an implied contract existed between Taff and Reeve, who plays Superman, to develop the treatment. Reeve denied he had ever done more than "riffle" through it. Nor was there any question of access—the treatment had been read by top studio executives as well. However, the judge refused to acknowledge the alleged similarities between Taff and Stoller's treatment and the screenplay eventually submitted by Reeve and two other writers. Taff said that the plot similarities are obvious and he intends to press his case.

The similarities alleged by Taff in court documents cover SUPERMAN IV's basic premise which involves the superhero saving the world from nuclear destruction by disarming all nuclear weapons, the idea Taff originally pitched to Reeve. Among the specific scenes Taff alleged were swiped are: 1) the movie's opening scene in

which Superman rescues a Soviet space shuttle from disaster (an American ship in Taff's script); 2) the gimmick of an energy module in the ship which brought Superman to Earth which is capable of bringing him back to life, but only once (in Taff's script it is a crystal from the Fortress of Solitude, Superman's arctic retreat); 3) Superman addresses the United Nations' General Assembly on the subject of world peace to a tearful, standing ovation; 4) Superman destroys the world's nuclear weapons with a net in outer-space which he then hurls into the sun (in Taff's script Superman uses a colossal satellite to do the job); and 5) U.S. and Soviet generals object to Superman's nuclear intervention and conspire with Lex Luther to kill him (Taff's script did not involve Luther).

During the course of writing

Nuclearman (Mark Pillow) being rigged to fly in SUPERMAN IV which writers Barry Taff and Kenneth Stoller say is based on their nuclear-themed ideas.

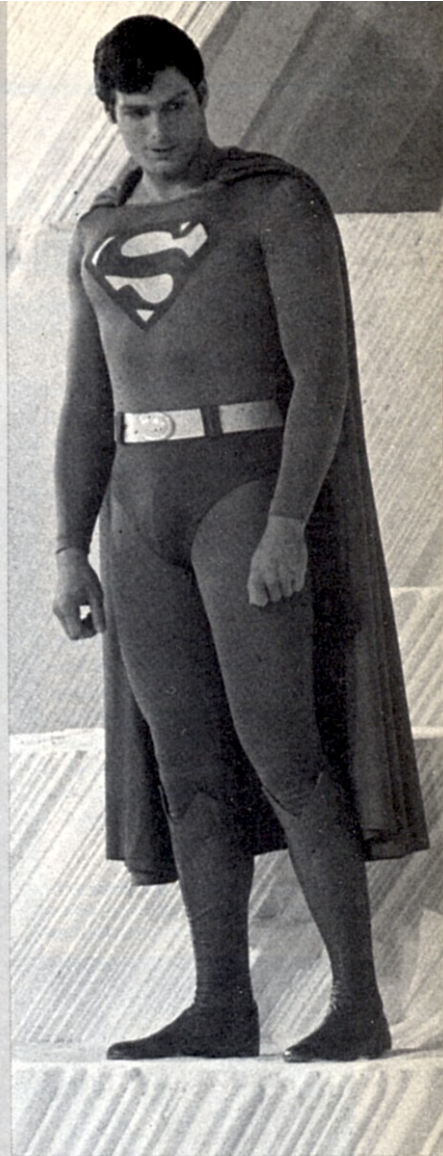


his treatment, Taff said he received considerable input from director John Milius, his friend and mentor. Taff said that Milius declared this case to be "the most blatant case of outright plagiarism he'd ever seen in his life." Here's the chronology of events posited by Taff and Stoller:

Taff and Stoller wrote their treatment for SUPERMAN IV in May and June of 1985, and in July, duly registered it with the Writer's Guild. In August, they enlisted Craig Snider, a producer, to pitch the treatment to Bruce Berman, head of development at Warner Bros. Berman reportedly said, "Get it to me as soon as you can." Taff dashed off a copy to Berman but it was mailed back later with a cover letter stating it was being returned "unread" to "avoid any legal complication."

On September 27, Taff and Stoller mailed a copy of the treatment to actor Reeve via certified mail. Reeve's wife signed the receipt. On October 10 they also mailed a copy to Natalie Singer, Reeve's friend and former secretary. On October 22, Reeve appeared on GOOD MORNING AMERICA and announced, not for the first time, that he had no intention of performing in another SUPERMAN sequel.

But on October 31, Reeve phoned Taff, acknowledging receipt of the treatment. Initially the phone was answered by Taff's answering machine but



Christopher Reeve as Superman, hit with a \$45 million lawsuit for allegedly stealing script ideas for SUPERMAN IV.

Taff picked up the receiver as Reeve was leaving his message and the conversation was recorded. During the 10-minute call, Taff said Reeve raved about his treatment, saying it only needed a few changes. Reeve allegedly concluded by saying that he would pitch the treatment to the head of Warner Bros. That was the last Taff ever heard from Reeve.

On November 18, 1985, Reeve met with Mark Canton, head of story development at Warners. Reeve later testified that he recounted to Canton what he claimed to be his original story treatment for SUPERMAN IV. Like Taff and Stoller's treatment, it posited Superman in a fight against an international clique of generals to save the world from thermonuclear destruction. On December 3, 1985, Reeve re-

continued on page 57



## STREET TRASH

*This bizarre, quirky student film heads for midnight screenings to garner cult audience.*

By Dan Scapperotti

STREET TRASH is a weird little student film that has graduated to the ranks of the professionals. Its story of winos and derelicts who melt in multicolors after quaffing bottles from a case of old abandoned wine began as a 10 minute 16mm short made by 21 year-old Jim Muro at New York's School of Visual Arts. Muro's teacher at the school, Roy Frumkes, saw potential in the film and its filmmaker and raised an estimated \$100,000 to produce it as a feature. The title is the first theatrical release for newly-formed Lightning Video, the low-budget exploitation arm of Vestron Video, and will go out unrated.

Jim Muro, a 21 year-old director from New York's School of Visual Arts who made the project his graduate thesis.



Frumkes, a teacher at New York's School of Visual Arts for ten years, made an earlier unsuccessful feature with student filmmakers called TALES THAT WILL TEAR YOUR HEART OUT, which included a sequence directed by Wes Craven. Frumkes' also filmed a documentary on the making of the second installment of George Romero's zombie trilogy called DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD, which had minimal exposure.

When Muro raised \$30,000 to turn STREET TRASH into a 35mm feature, he approached Frumkes to write the script. Frumkes not only agreed to do the script but offered to produce the film as well, sure that he could raise more money to expand the project's commercial viability. Muro directed the film as his thesis project at the school.

Set in lower Manhattan among the winos and derelicts who inhabit the shadowy world of the downtrodden, the project was inspired by Akira Kurosawa's DO-DES-KA-DEN, a surrealistic portrait of Japanese slum life. The story follows two brothers who are refugees from a broken family. They find a volatile case of Tenafly Viper wine in the basement of a liquor store near the junk yard where they have taken refuge. As winos in the area begin melting away, a tough cop from 42nd Street gets involved in the case whose presence ties several of the story threads together.



Producer and screenwriter Roy Frumkes prepares to film his cameo as an infected businessman who is discovered melting by Bill Chepil as a renegade New York cop.

The script was tailored to a collision yard in Brooklyn, owned by Muro's father, which included an adjacent junk yard and warehouse. Several auto body stalls in the warehouse were converted into sets and others became a makeup studio and wardrobe room that were occupied for 14 weeks of filming. Muro also owned his own Steadicam which provided the film with a plethora of what Frumkes termed "incredible moving shots which belie its low budget."

The horrific highlights of the film are the melting victims, which spew goo that looks like a box of melted crayons, the work of Jenny Aspinall, a New Yorker who specializes in low-budget effects. In one scene an overweight victim explodes from the tainted wine. The effect, engineered by Dean Kartalas, is in keeping with Muro's imaginative approach. An exploding dummy was stuffed

with Drakes Cakes, donated by the baker as a product promotion.

Frumkes has a cameo in the film as a businessman and inadvertent victim of the melting death who gets infected by a wino. "I start to melt and run down the street," he said, describing the scene. "We blocked off four street corners in Brooklyn for a couple of hours to get the shot. I had an elaborate appliance on and couldn't see very well. On the second take a car came around one of the corners right in front of me. I knew the camera was running and I knew I should stop, but suddenly my producer's instinct took over and I remembered the cost of 35mm film. I kept going and hit the car."

The next morning Frumkes was so sore he couldn't move but it was all for naught. Muro had filmed the shot with his Steadicam, and it couldn't be used because the crew rushed in, thinking Frumkes had been injured. □

## BOXOFFICE SURVEY: GENRE'S 1ST QUARTER UP FOR 3RD YEAR IN A ROW

An analysis of the 50 Top Grossing Films, as reported weekly by *Variety*, reveals that in the first 13 weeks of 1987, revenue from horror, fantasy and science fiction films increased a substantial 28.1% over last year, despite 25.6% fewer genre films in release. Film grosses in general slid slightly by 2.04%.

In the first quarter the genre accounted for a little more than one-fourth (27.3%) of all film revenue generated at the boxoffice. This continues the genre's healthy first quarter pattern established over the past two years resulting from distributors

releasing better titles during the period than in previous years. Genre totals for the first quarter of 1985 were up 23.2% from 1984, and 1986's first quarter showed a 15.8% increase over 1985.

Top-grossing genre films in the *Variety* totals are listed at right (through 6/3). For purposes of breakdown by genre, titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks each title made it into the Top 50 listings since January. The totals do not include boxoffice figures from previous years

for reissues or films (•) first released in 1986. The dollar amounts listed represent only a small, scientific sample of a film's total earnings (about one fourth of a film's domestic gross).

Of the 144 titles that comprised the weekly listings, 32 or 22.2% were genre titles. There were 6 science fiction films (11 last year), accounting for 4.2% of the total and 4.8% of receipts; 12 fantasy films (19 last year), 8.3% of the total and 13.2% of receipts; and 14 horror films (13 last year), 9.7% of the total and 9.2% of receipts. □

### TOP GENRE FILMS OF '87

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PT. 3 (h, 13)	\$12,859,310
• STAR TREK IV (sf, 14)	\$ 8,902,375
• THE GOLDEN CHILD (f, 11)	\$ 8,845,607
• LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (f, 12)	\$ 7,355,416
MANNEQUIN (f, 11)	\$ 6,843,404
ANGEL HEART (h, 13)	\$ 6,676,219
PROJECT X (sf, 7)	\$ 4,546,200
CREEPSHOW 2 (h, 5)	\$ 4,057,084
THE GATE (h, 3)	\$ 3,438,969
• LADY AND THE TRAMP (f, 7)	\$ 2,791,722
ARISTOCATS (f, 7)	\$ 1,935,721
EVIL DEAD 2 (h, 11)	\$ 1,649,747
WITCHBOARD (h, 6)	\$ 1,547,360
MAKING MR RIGHT (sf, 4)	\$ 1,497,318
THE KINDRED (sf, 7)	\$ 1,441,432
• AN AMERICAN TAIL (f, 12)	\$ 1,382,913



# STRANDED

## Photojournalist Tex Fuller makes his directing debut with this tale of stranded extraterrestrials.

By Kyle Counts

What would you do if you were to go down to the kitchen late one night, only to find five ET's in your living room?

Imagine that as the first five minutes of a new science fiction film and you have **STRANDED**, a tale of refugee aliens who invade the North Carolina farmhouse lived-in by 16 year-old orphan Deidre (Ione Skye of **RIVER'S EDGE**) and her grandmother Grace (Maureen O'Sullivan, lately of **HANNAH AND HER SISTERS**). Although the creatures are basically benevolent (they're being chased by an assassin), they inadvertently create a hostage situation that pits the recently elected black sheriff (**BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET**'s Joe Morton) against a vengeful mob of shotgun-wielding townspeople.

Written by newcomer Alan Castle, the New Line Cinema release, made for slightly under \$3 million, will bow in September under the direction of Tex Fuller. The title, which conflicts with that of a made-for-TV movie, may yet be changed. Ironically, the script's original title, **SHOCKWAVE**, was abandoned for being similar to Ken Weiderhorn's **SHOCK WAVES** (1977), a tale of Nazi Zombies. Alien makeups and costumes for **STRANDED** are by Oscar-winner Michele Burke, nominated again last year for **CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR**.

Fuller, making his feature film directing debut, made his mark as a photojournalist with his definitive study of cheetahs. He began making documentary films in 1977 with **DEATH**

**ROW**, a **RASHOMON**-like profile of condemned murderers. Many completed projects later Fuller attempted to break into commercial films by writing a screenplay based on **DEATH ROW**, but found it a tough sell in high-concept Hollywood. A longtime fan of fantastic films, he decided a modestly budgeted genre story would more likely be a viable starting point for his feature career.

Fuller's search for material ended at the Paul Kohner agency, where Gary Salt, Alan Castle's agent at the time, showed him Castle's script. Taken by the script's Faulkneresque theme—the protagonists band together and protect the aliens from the fear and loathing of the townspeople, a la **FRANKENSTEIN**—Fuller

took the property to Mark Levinson and Scott Rosenfelt, producers of **TEEN WOLF** and the forthcoming **REMOTE CONTROL**. They liked it, and within six months the picture was put into production. (Castle's second script, **THE WEAPON**, will also be produced by the same team. Fuller may direct as well.)

Why was **STRANDED** the right script for Fuller's big-screen debut? "It had the elements of a lot of pictures that I cared about," the director explained. "A kind of **DESPERATE HOURS** situation—the ordinary family being held prisoner by a group of escaped convicts—and a kind of **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** fairy tale quality, with this sweet, innocent love story between Deidre and one of the aliens. At

its most basic, it is a story of intolerance, fear, courage, and decency."

"Most genre films about alien invasion have been treated as horror stories," said screenwriter Castle. "While **STRANDED** has its share of suspense sequences, it isn't primarily a horror story. I tried to create a well-rounded vision of both sides of the tale, which essentially is a hostage crisis, a crisis of communication."

In the film, one of the visitors from space is mortally wounded by gunfire from one of the family's neighbors. The aliens, in turn, kill the man's brother, and he rounds up several friends to assist in a large-scale retaliation. The house is soon surrounded by law enforcement officials and the assembled locals, trapping the aliens inside and forcing them to use Grace and Deidre as their last defense. Since

they do not speak English, the creatures communicate with their captive hosts via mental telepathy, using a glowing crystal.

In keeping with Fuller's idea that "the less language the aliens use, the better," over half of Castle's original dialogue was lost during filming. The actors did work on a language of sorts, but it was decided to limit their articulation to almost vowel-like sounds. Communication will be established by the actors in the form of looks and gestures, expressions and reactions, as it was in the silent film era. Sound effects editor Dane Davis is designing an artificial language that will be looped in post-production.

"One of the biggest chal-

continued on page 57



Tex Fuller directs Florence Schaufli as Queen, in makeup by Michelle Burke, on the workings of an alien device in **STRANDED**, the story of a crashed spaceship which New Line opens in September.



# LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

**Oscar nominee Lyle Conway talks about breathing amazing animatronic life into the film's crazy man-eating plant.**

*By Phil Koch*

"I've given you sunshine, I've given you dirt, you've given me nothing but heartache and hurt, please grow for me!" Plant designer-creator Lyle Conway might have echoed Seymour's lyrics during his year-long task, breathing life into the fabric and steel that was to become Audrey II in **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**. The work garnered Conway an Oscar nomination for Best Visual Effects.

Having successfully worked with director Frank Oz before on **THE DARK CRYSTAL**, Conway was one of the first people hired for **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, along with production designer Roy Walker. "I can't imagine the movie without Oz!" said Conway. "He came into it with some wonderful ideas. Having worked with him before, I knew from the start the emphasis he puts on performance, not just an effect which moves right but a character that thinks and has a soul. And soul is something Audrey II has in abundance! She couldn't just



Conway's jewel-like design for the little seedling bought from a Chinese florist that grows into Audrey II. Conway modeled the lips on Ellen Greene's.

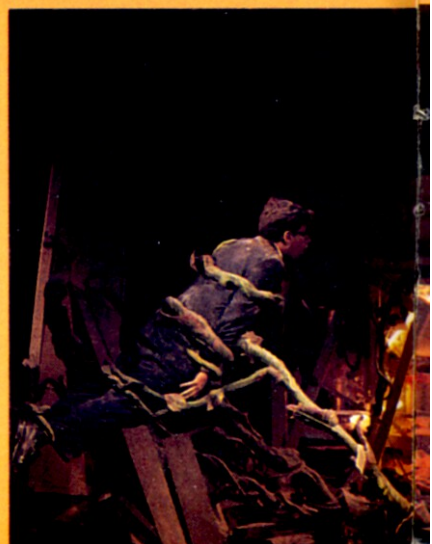
thrash. She had to hold her own vocally against the likes of Rick Moranis and Ellen Greene. We got Audrey II not only to act and sing but in the tradition of many a ham, to chew up the scenery (and occasionally an actor as well!)."

Conway has created remarkable animatronic characters for films like **RETURN TO OZ** and **DREAMCHILD**. On **LITTLE SHOP OF HOR-**

**RORS** Conway brought in his own key personnel such as production coordinator Barbara Griffiths, chief mechanizers Chris Ostwald and Neal Scanlon, head of fabrication Sherry Amott and designers David White, Nik Williams, and Jim Sandys.

Conway noted that many new faces were added to the crew regularly. "It was our youngest crew ever—the average age was something like eighteen," he said. We started with this core group. As the weeks went by and the work load increased, so gradually did our shop, to 42 people."

From the start, the look of Audrey II was intended to be different from that in the hit Broadway musical, but Conway sought to capture the same energy of performance, or more. "It was really difficult arriving at a look," said Conway. "I think a lot of it was dictated by the Roy Walker sets. There was a realistic quality about the interior of the flower shop. Anything too cartoony would be too much at odds with the reality of the shop. Yet it had to be stylized

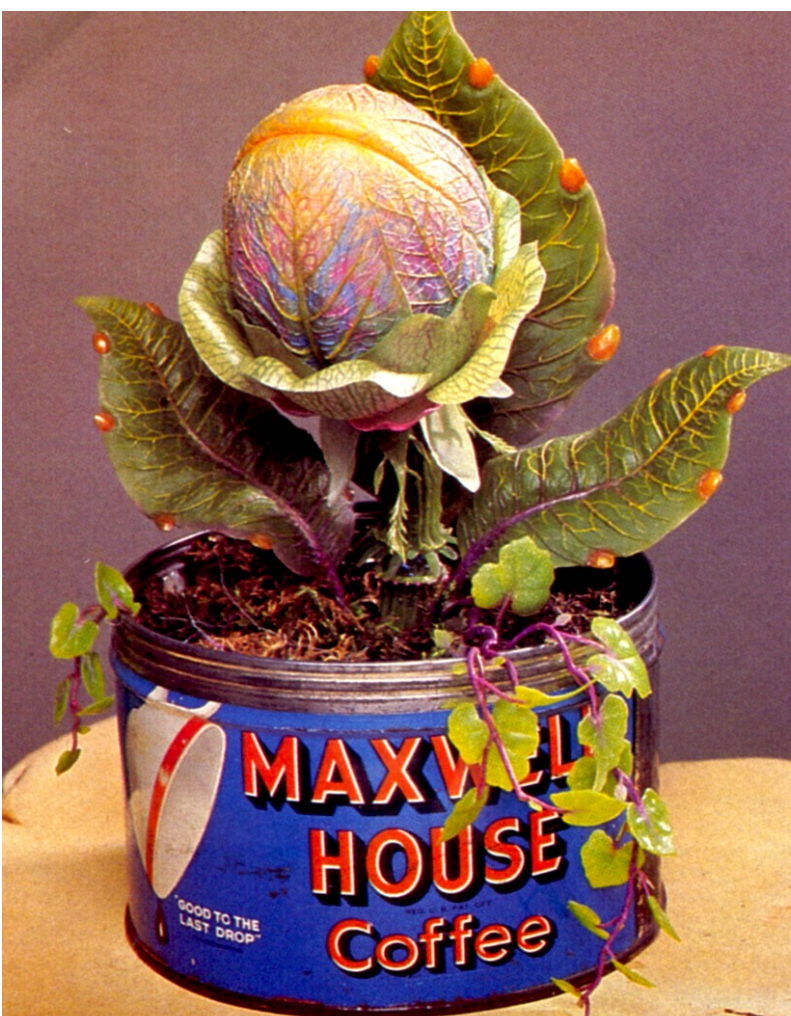






Plant designer and animatronic effects supervisor Lyle Conway (l) with director Frank Oz and Mean Green on the set of Mushnik's Flower Shop at England's Pinewood Studios. Far Left: Seymour gets eaten after losing his showdown with the plant in the film's original ending, which was dropped after unfavorable audience reaction. Left: Bran Ferren's optical effect for the new ending had Seymour electrocute the plant to save himself and Audrey and please audiences.





Left: Conway's exquisite design for the Coffee Can Audrey II, meant to suggest the delicate vulnerability of a baby bird in a nest, its color scheme based on orchid research. Right: Rick Moranis as Seymour poses with the Radio Station Audrey II, an eighteen inch version that was cable-activated with radio-controlled lips and tongue movement.

enough so that it wasn't too real to be at odds with the performance of the actors. The whole film was a tightrope walking act. Frank Oz constantly stressed the quality he was looking for, a slightly surreal, slightly camp quality. 'Heightened reality' is what he kept calling it. Not so camp that you wouldn't care about the characters, but not so real that you'd care too much about

them."

The plant's "look" evolved from botanical research Conway conducted at Kew Gardens, outside London. "A lot of the orchid research was put to use for the mouth interiors," said Conway. "I saw the plant as being fairly simple in its pod shape but when it opened its mouth it would have a more complicated structure inside."

Different stages in Audrey

II's growth were named for the film's songs. First designed and built was "Feed Me," the four-and-a-half foot tall version that is the first to talk and sing. Conway chose this starting point to work out the lip sync problems that would prove even more difficult on the larger versions. Drawing upon his orchid and succulent research, Conway tried to use colors and textures not often

seen.

To design the plants Conway first sculpted small five-inch maquettes in clay (see page 26). "I'd show them to Frank Oz, he'd make suggestions and then I'd go back and make modifications based on his input," said Conway of the design process. "The advantage of a maquette is that it can be photographed from different angles. Production designer

**FEED ME** was initially sculpted by Conway as a five inch maquette (middle), then built as a 4½ foot puppet (below) after Frank Oz approved the design. Oz nixed the idea of large saliva bubbles.



To give energy to the plant's lip-syncing performance, Conway came up with the idea of undercranking the camera, which speeded up the action but required Rick Moranis (below) to sing in slow motion.





# LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

## THE MAN BEHIND THE PLANT

*From childhood puppeteer to animatronic engineer on a grand scale, Lyle Conway's yen for fantasy fulfills a cherished dream.*

By Phil Koch

In the films like *RETURN TO OZ*, *DREAMCHILD*, and *THE DARK CRYSTAL*, Lyle Conway has tackled the impossible, bringing life to creatures that existed only as rough sketches or vague ideas. His bold creation of Audrey II for *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* represents Conway's finest work to date and earned him an Academy Award nomination for Best Visual Effects. This success with puppets on a grand scale is for Conway the realization of a childhood dream.

Raised on Chicago's Southwest side, Conway first became interested in the world of fantasy creatures as a child in the early fifties who doted on puppeteer Burr Tillstrom's landmark television series *KUKLA, FRAN AND OLLIE*. After school, Conway would attend the show's live broadcasts, and, for his own amusement, made several reproductions of the characters out of materials he found around the house. Another strong influence was the fifties telecast of Willis O'Brien's *KING KONG*. The primeval beast captured Conway's imagination and made him aware of the worlds that could be created on film. At an early age, Conway determined to make a career for himself in movies.

After art school and exhibits in art galleries, winning numerous awards from the Art Institute of Chicago, Conway spent four years as a social worker. He worked as a designer for a leading toy company before going to Hollywood to work with special effects ace, Gene Warren and stop-motion expert David Allen. Then followed the creation of



Lyle Conway, age eight, was already hooked on puppetry and fantasy. Inset: Conway with the Ollie puppet he rebuilt for idol Burr Tillstrom.



characters for Jim Henson and the sculpting of "Miss Piggy" for the fifth season of *THE MUPPET SHOW* and the film *THE GREAT MUPPET CAPER*.

The Jim Henson and Frank Oz film *THE DARK CRYSTAL* (13:4:32) gave Conway the opportunity to pioneer the development of cable and radio control mechanisms. Working with co-director Frank Oz, Conway went far beyond mere pup-

petry in the creation of animatronic characters like Aughra and the Chamberlain Skeksis, with fully-developed personalities and human-like wants and desires. During work on *THE DARK CRYSTAL*, Conway had a chance meeting with his childhood idol, Burr Tillstrom, who asked Conway to remake his beloved "Ollie"—a childhood dream come full-circle.

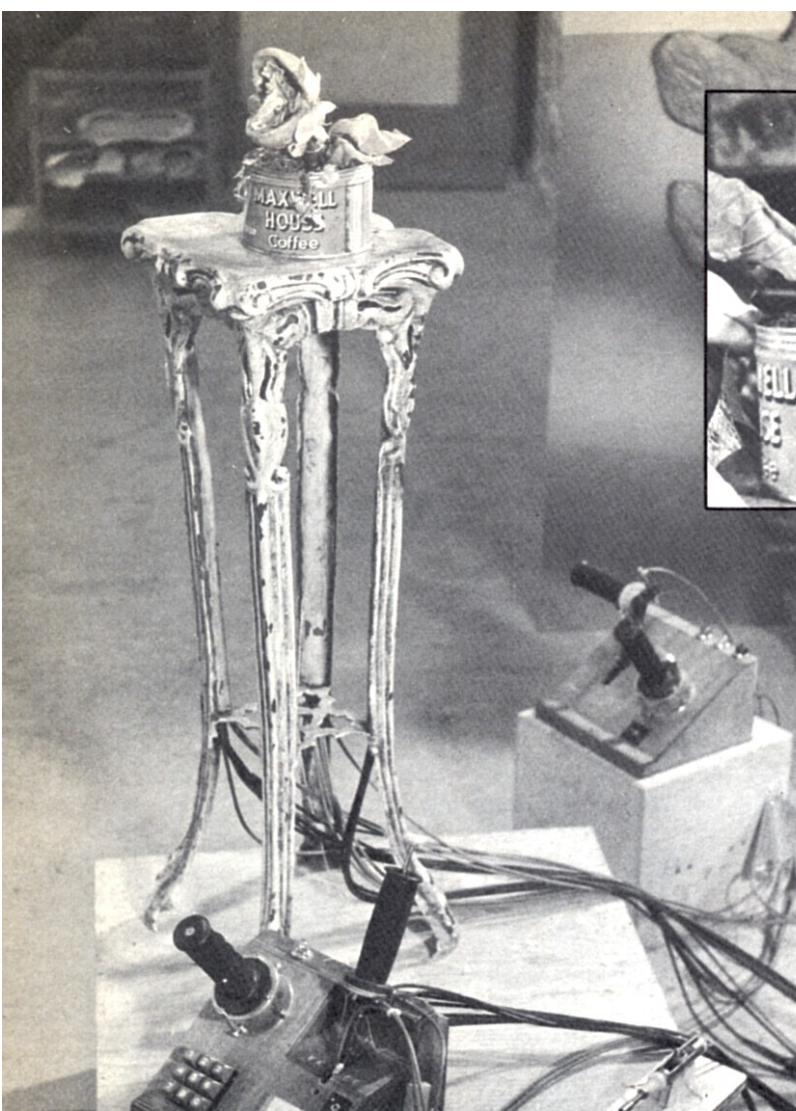
*DARK CRYSTAL* producer

Gary Kurtz brought Conway onto his next project, Disney's *RETURN TO OZ* (15:2:27), directed by Walter Murch. As Supervisor of Creature Design, Conway created a wide range of characters including Jack Pumpkinhead and the talking hen of Oz, Billina, Conway's favorite character to date. The perfect recreation of a live chicken, Conway's animatronic hen could deliver dialogue and eggs in equal doses. *RETURN TO OZ* also marked Conway's debut as a performer, creating the character as well as the voice of the "Gump," a bizarre creature—part sofa, part moose, and part palm tree.

Conway returned briefly to the Henson Organization to set up Jim Henson's Creature Shop where he took on the design and creation of characters from *Alice in Wonderland* for EMI's prestigious production of Dennis Potter's script *DREAMCHILD* (15:2:32). The film was a chance for Conway to refine his skills while working under severe time and budget restrictions. Six creatures were made in fourteen weeks, at a fraction of the *RETURN TO OZ* budget.

Conway's groundbreaking work on Audrey II for *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* has set a new standard for animatronic character work in films to come. Conway remembered the first time he saw the play on which the film is based. "I saw it in New York when *THE DARK CRYSTAL* premiered," he said. "That was years before I was hired. It was the sort of thing I looked at and thought, 'That's the kind of thing I should be doing!' I had no idea that four years later I'd be involved in it." □





**COFFEE CAN** Audrey II was just four-and-a-half inches high, but was fully articulated with a great deal of head, neck, tongue, and lip movement. Shown (left) are the puppet's three cable control units. The cables were concealed within the legs of the table base constructed for the scene. With a stem less than an inch wide, fine cables were used, and when angles were too severe, dacron line was employed.

of the plant was supported by an inside pole connected with bungee cords. Twelve internal armatures controlled mouth and lip movements, actuated by cables running down the stem to operators underneath the set.

**L**icking the lip sync problems on "Feed Me" was critical to the success of the film. **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** was, after all, a musical with the plant one of its major vocalists. If "Feed Me" didn't work, the movie wouldn't either. To give energy to the plant's performance, Conway came up with the idea of undercranking the camera, something he originally envisioned would be necessary initially only for the largest stage.

Roy Walker made a miniature shop set the same scale as the maquette so we could take some photos. That gave us a good feel for the look of it and we could send those shots to producer David Geffen to get his feedback."

Once the prototype for "Feed Me" was approved, the songs and dialogue were rehearsed for three months. At this point, Oz and Conway decided to hire

Mike Ploog to storyboard all the plant scenes. The storyboards were set to music on video to assist everyone in rehearsal. To relieve the strain on the actors and the plant operators, no master shots were designed. Only the specific angles included in the storyboards were rehearsed and shot. A puppeteer operated the plant's jaw movements with his arms, from behind. The weight

**THE DENTIST** played by Steve Martin is seen from a mouth's-eye-view that was fabricated by Conway's shop. Also built by the shop was a prop head (below) which Rick Moranis feeds to the plant, a scene cut from the film.



"We wound up undercranking everything," he said. "Anytime you see the plant talking, it's undercranked by sixteen frames or twelve. Anytime you see Rick Moranis or Ellen Greene in a shot with the plant, they're acting and singing at half speed to lyrics being played back at half speed. We conducted a little video workshop with Moranis to work with him on moving at half speed."

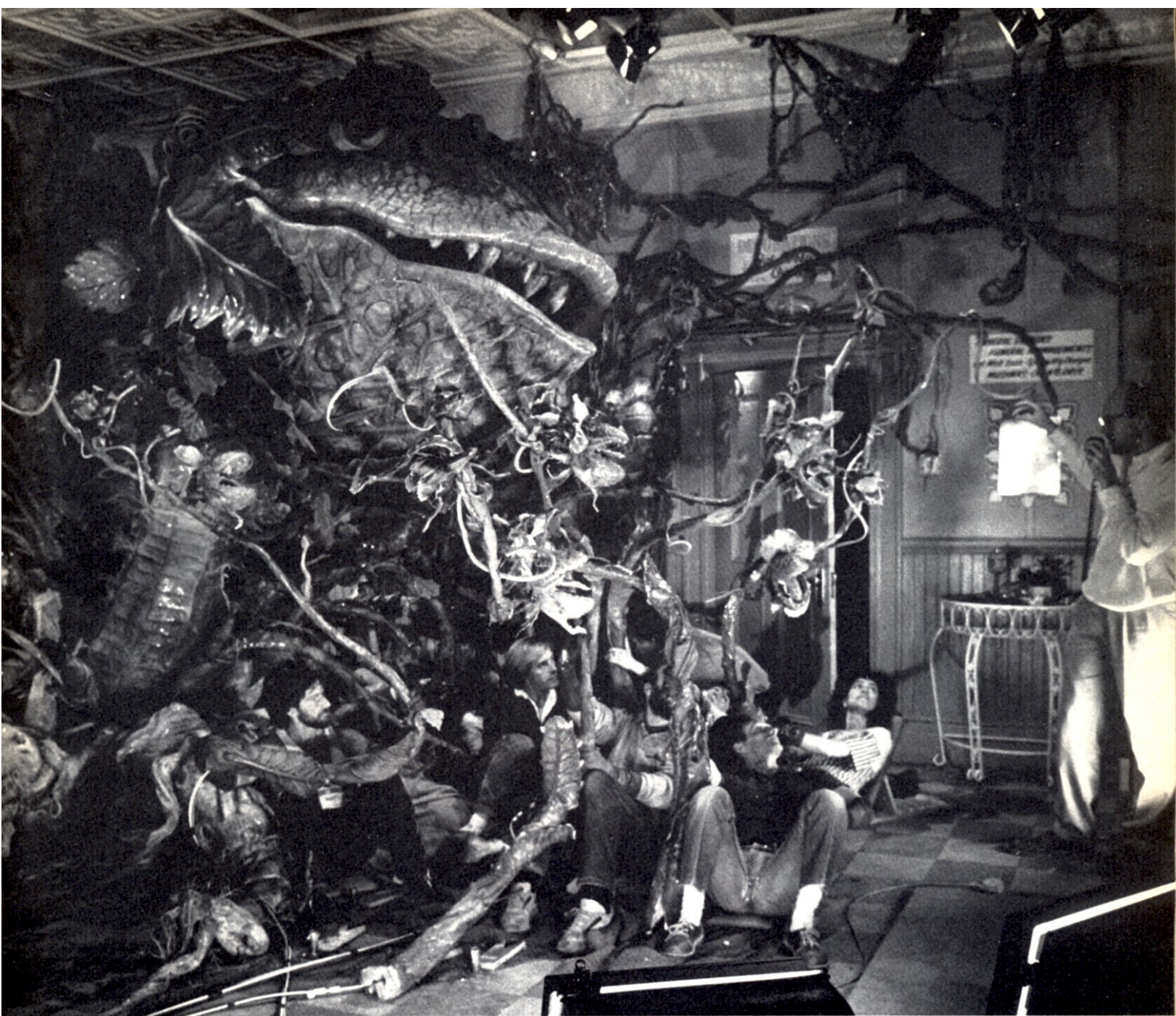
When the undercranked footage is projected normally at 24 frames per second the slow-moving performers look natural and Audrey II has more liveliness and zip than any animatronic special effect ever seen before, a quality that made both audiences and critics sit up and take notice. "I look at it and I can't believe that people accept it," said Conway of the undercranking. "To me it looks like just what it is, but nobody seems to pick up on it at all. Friends of mine in the effects business were surprised to hear how we did it! There's probably ten minutes of half speed work in the film. Something of a first I think."

"Nobody wanted to do it," continued Conway of the undercranking idea. "Frank Oz was always saying that anything that needed to be done to make Audrey II work, we'll do. But that terrified him a bit. The plant could actually lip sync in real time. What undercranking did was to make the energy level even higher. It just brought a degree of reality to the thing. It's really hard to describe unless you see both performances, at real speed and at half speed next to one another. There's just a punchiness and a vitality about it that you don't get at normal speed."

Conway also streamlined the plant's lip-syncing movements by videotaping tests of the lip movements of a crew person mouthing the song lyrics. "We began concentrating on the lip forms that we could use and eliminating the ones that we didn't need," said Conway. "So while it's not perfect lip-syncing, as long as you get your 'oohs' and 'aahs' and 'mmms' and 'ee' sounds, it looks like it's in sync to the lyrics."

Having mastered "Feed

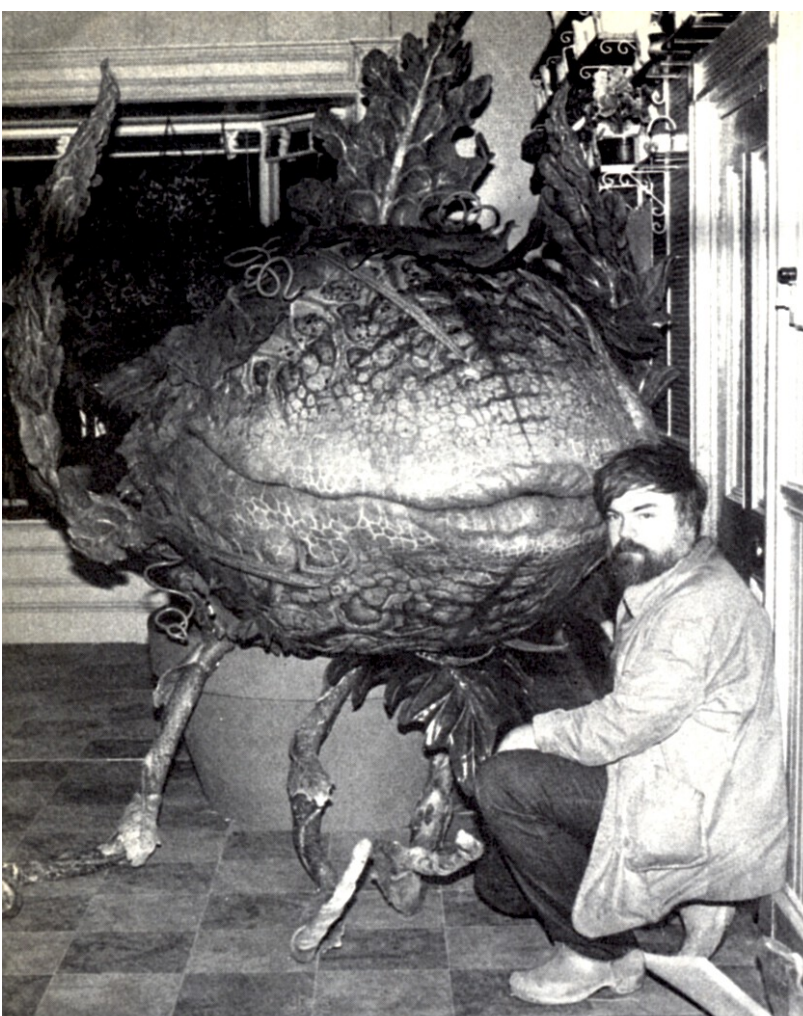




**FILMING MEAN GREEN** Audrey II director Frank Oz (above right) communicates with puppeteers beneath the set via radio and with vine wranglers on the set floor for the scene where the plant and its chorus of little pods sing a refrain of "Mean Green Mother." Left: Lyle Conway stands by his above ground cable crew as vine wranglers pull Ellen Greene toward the maw of Audrew II. The large, physically demanding cable controls were necessary due to the plant's bulk. Below: Mean Green key operator Antony Asbury.







**THE GREENING OF AUDREY II** was accomplished by design supervisor Lyle Conway with a staff of more than forty craftsmen and engineers. Left: Conway with Supertime Audrey II at Pinewood, as he readies the plant for filming. Supertime was eight feet tall, composed of urethane foam over an aluminum frame. Since the plant was originally to have no songs or dialogue in the sequence where it eats Mushnik, the flower shop owner, it was equipped only with a cable articulated tongue and fitted with a pair of mechanical legs for the swallowing scene. Above: Senior mechanical designer Tim Wheeler fits the unpainted foam skin to the aluminum frame. Above Right: Modeller Jeremy Hunt sculpts a leaf to be vacuformed out of styrene. Right: Senior painter Jane Harding puts the finishing touches on leaves for the plant, cast on armatures.



Me," Conway scaled the work up and down for the smaller and larger versions of the plant. One of Conway's most "amazing" effects in the film shows little Audrey II, in her coffee can, grow from four and a half inches to one and a half feet. The pod and stem "growth" was actually accomplished by the use of perspective as the plant moved closer to the camera on a six foot track. Head,

mouth, and stem movement was controlled by radio. An oversized leaf uncurred behind the pod and stem as the plant "grew." While lining up the shot, the motion of the plant on the track cast a shadow on the table at screen right.

"Because the lighting had been established, we did an in-camera soft split, just clipping the table out," said Conway. "All the cables ran through the

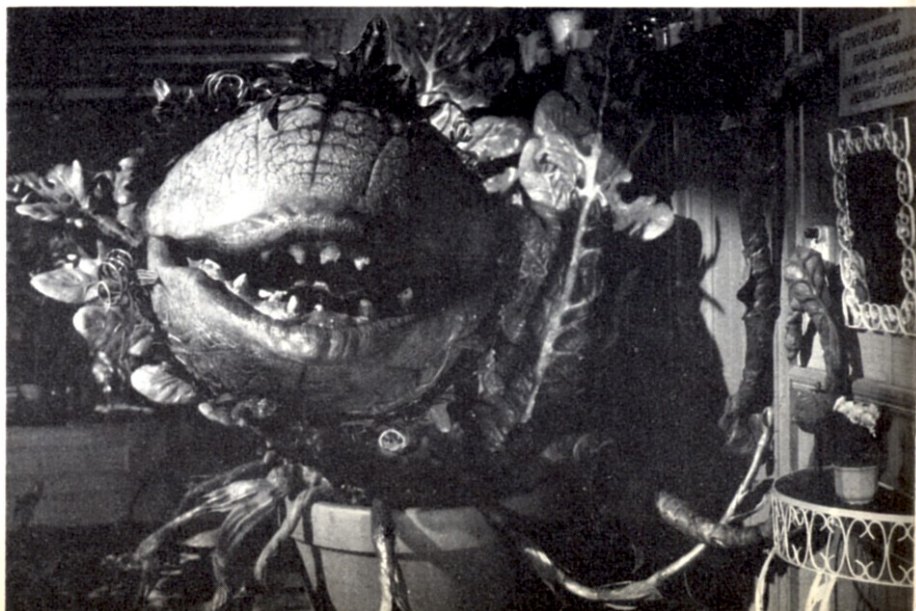
table legs. Silk screened rubber was used to reproduce the coffee can and label behind which were hidden three small pneumatic rams, whose controlled speed created dents. The leaves were unrolled by pushing heavy wire through curled cable housings."

Though the illusion was highly effective, at first Conway was dubious that it could be made to work. He worked

for a week in secret, building a mock-up for a video test to show his crew and get their honest reaction. "When they were fooled," said Conway, "it was time to show it to Frank Oz. He liked it but insisted on knowing how it was done. After I told him, he watched the test again and said, 'It'll never work!' In a way he was right. Once you know the gag,

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**SUPPERTIME MINIATURE** Audrey II was the size of Feed Me and became necessary when singing was added to the scene. Left: Senior painter David White copies Conway's color scheme from the full size plant. Right: The miniature utilized the lip-sync mechanisms of Feed Me and appeared on a scaled down set, without actors.





# LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

## FRANK OZ ON DIRECTING

*A behind-the-camera post-mortem on success, shooting special effects and previewing the original ending that didn't work.*

By Dan Scapperotti

Frank Oz has been the voice of the world's most famous porker, Miss Piggy, and other Muppets including Fozzie Bear, Animal, and the Cookie Monster, as well as the supreme Jedi Knight, Yoda, and has had roles in several films including *TRADING PLACES*. But I didn't recognize Oz at first when we met for an interview over lunch at a Chinese restaurant in New York. He had shaved off his traditional mustache. But, then he said "Hello."

Oz was basking in the successful release of his latest directorial effort, the film version of the off-Broadway smash *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*. The director first turned down the project when it was offered to him by producer David Geffen. Oz felt the script was too littered with conflicting elements—mixing the horror, comedy, and musical genres. About a week after passing on the project Oz came up with the idea for the film's Greek chorus of rock singers and felt he had found a proper hook on which to hang the script. His original vision of the chorus, however, never materialized.

Geffen asked Oz to do a rewrite with Howard Ashman, the screenwriter and director of the play. Oz hashed out the necessary script revisions. In October 1985 a seven month shoot began which would eventually tap every sound stage at England's legendary Pinewood Studios, including the mam-



Director Frank Oz sets up a shot with Lyle Conway's Mean Green Audrey II at Pinewood.

moth 007 stage that had recently been renovated after a devastating fire.

"We used the 007 stage not for its size but for its depth," said Oz as the waitress presented our menus. "We could have people walk down steps into an alley, action like that. We only used ¾ of the stage for our set. I'd never use it again. It's just so huge. There are tremendous sound and atmospheric problems. Smoke lingers and condensation is always trouble. We used it because it is marvelous for

scope."

The vastness of the 007 stage makes it impractical to generate enough heat to keep the stage comfortable. The chill air causes breath condensation when the actors speak their lines. Oz overcame this visual non sequitur by having the cast put ice cubes in their mouths before speaking their lines. "They had a tough job," he said.

Geffen and Oz tossed around the names of big stars for the role of Audrey, the film's wacky heroine, but both had loved

Ellen Greene's portrayal in the stage version and decided to screen test her before presenting the script to more mainstream actresses. "She was great," exclaimed Oz, obviously satisfied with his choice. "If the camera hadn't liked her then we would have seriously considered someone else."

Another coup for the production was the casting of Steve Martin in the role of the sadistic dentist, Orin, Audrey's erstwhile boyfriend. Martin would enhance his scenes, improvising bits that punctuated the comedic elements of his character. "Socking the nurse as he strolls through his office was Martin's idea," said Oz. "I had him throw the helmet [used to introduce the conveniently fatal gas] and knock the nurse off. We decided that the helmet would obscure the camera's view so we eliminated it. Martin said 'Oh hell, I'll just hit her.' He is so stunning. He came up

with things like that if I didn't have a ready answer. Tearing off the doll's head was also his idea. Hopefully, I provided a well-constructed comedy staging of what to do in each room and then he embellished that with new ideas. It was production designer Roy Walker's idea to do the dentist's office in black and white and chrome and I thought that was a great idea for its visual style."

Oz chose not to do the excessive coverage of scenes that is normal in film production.

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# LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS



Spread: Audrey II bounces on the Brooklyn bridge to the tune of "Don't Feed the Plants," a song dropped from the film when the ending was cut. Left: Audrey II scales a New York skyscraper. Right: Rising from New York harbor to attack city.



# THE LOST ENDING

*Effects expert Richard Conway on the spectacular \$5 million special effects finale you didn't see.*

*By Alan Jones*

Richard Conway said he has still yet to receive a good explanation as to why his climactic model work was axed when the original ending of *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* was vetoed in favor of a more upbeat one. Conway has worked on *ALIEN*, *INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM*, *LABYRINTH*, and

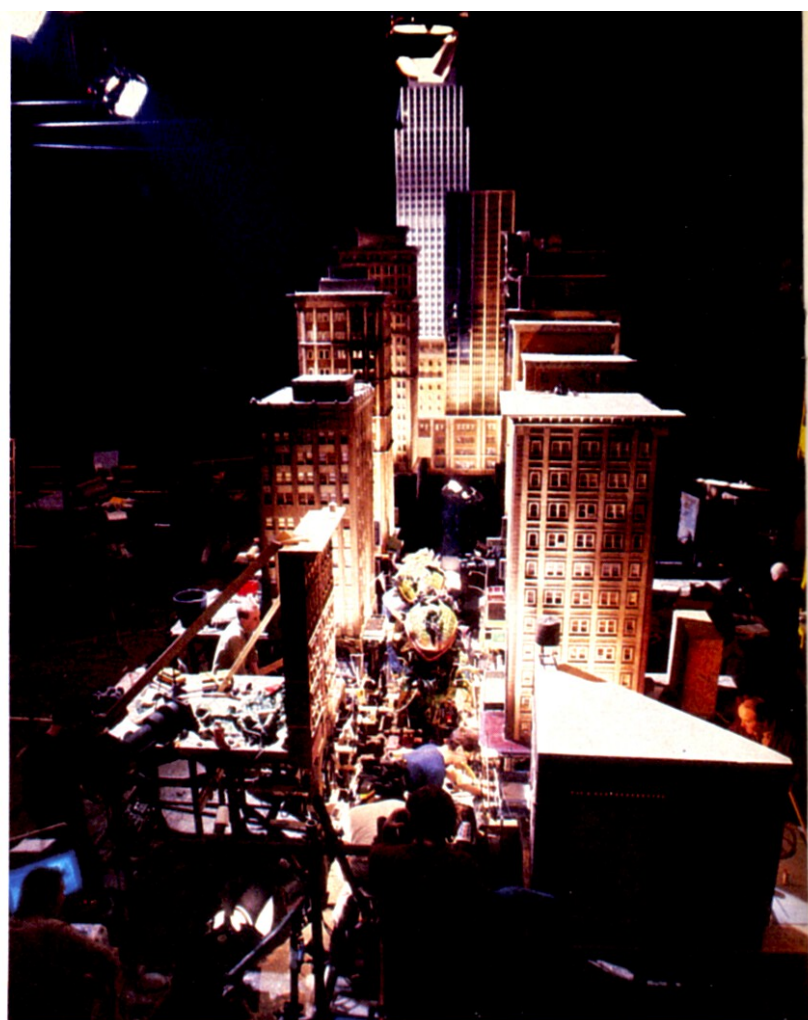
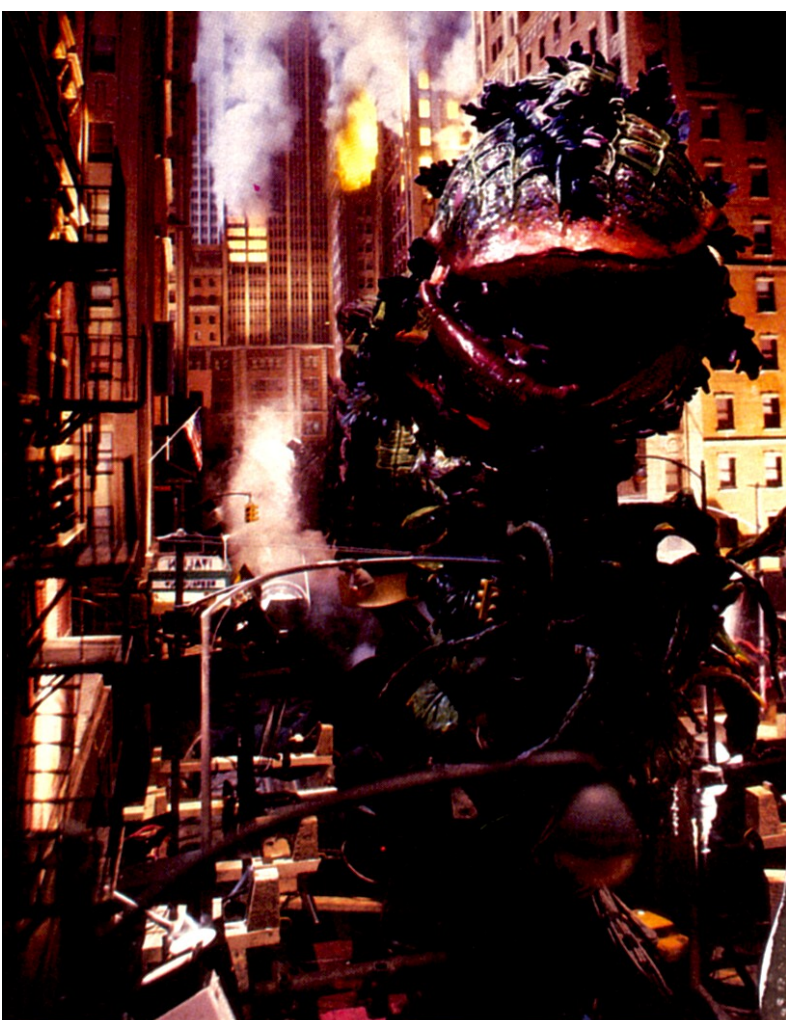
more recently *SUPERMAN IV*, and won a British Academy award for *BRAZIL*. At the moment he is involved in extensive preproduction for Terry Gilliam's *THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN* which will take him to Rome for eight months. But his experience on *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* still rankles.

"I would dearly love to know

what everybody thought the problem was," he said. "It seemed so indulgent to wipe away \$5 million worth of footage because the ending was deemed too relentless. If you are showing a city being razed to the ground how else can you approach it? I've never seen the stuff I worked on even cut together. I made overtures but was told it was impossible. I'm so disappointed because every-







**RAMPAGING PLANTS** are filmed by Richard Conway's miniature effects team, plowing through a fifteen foot high New York street. Filming at five times normal speed, Conway had to rig the action, lasting six seconds, to occur in little more than a second. An up-tilted camera avoided the use of mattes to show fleeing crowds.

thing was in our favor. It involved nightshooting which is always excellent. Everything was spectacular and rewarding because we managed to get the optimum value out of the shots. There is no doubt in my mind that had the ending been left intact, **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** would have won the Oscar for Best Visual Effects."

Only one of Conway's shots

remains in the final release print of **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**. When Steve Martin makes his first appearance riding a motorcycle through the streets of New York, the back projection plate is Conway's. As a result his credit as Model Supervisor is "somewhere near the end next to the unit driver."

Conway was hired for the film on the recommendation of

plant creator Lyle Conway. Though both effects experts share the same last name, they are not related. "The production wanted an ending like the stage play and they didn't know how to do it," said Richard Conway. "They wanted a simple sequence to take the plant out of the flower shop and give it a more menacing edge. Lyle Conway had been constructing the plants for

eight months before we started. We were on it for eleven months, even though it was originally only supposed to be six."

Conway's crew consisted of eight special effects technicians but eventually numbered about 36, including plasterers and four cameramen. "We shot for four months on our own separate stage," he said. "We totalled 120 different slate

#### AUDREY II TAKES THE A TRAIN

in a miniature effects sequence by Richard Conway in which the rampaging plants chew up the elevated track and swallow a train.

Left: Setting up the shot with two plant miniatures measuring three feet, six inches high, showing the hydraulic control mechanisms which were computerized to repeat movements. The painted latex plant skins were supplied by Lyle Conway's creature design shop. Note the wheels on the building miniatures, which could be repositioned as sets for the other sequences.





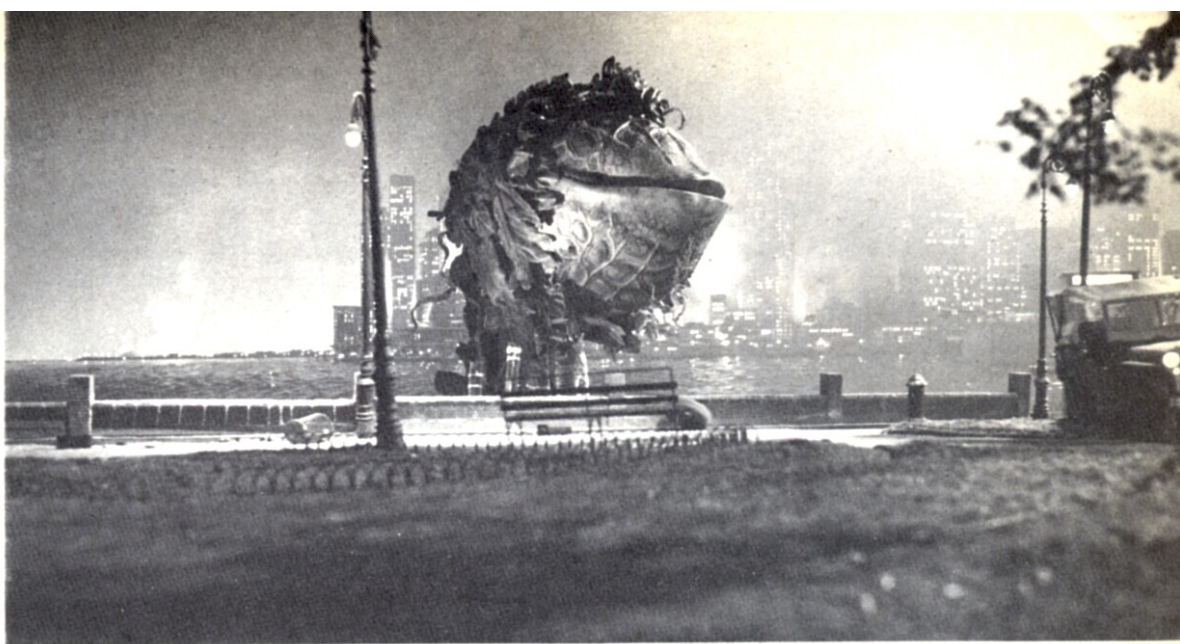
numbers which also meant roughly the same amount of model shots although the entire sequence lasted for only 60 seconds." Lyle Conway, however, who viewed the footage cut together estimated the original cut of the unused effects at about five minutes.



utlining the original ending of **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**,

Richard Conway described the action as Audrey II breaks free of its flower pot after eating Audrey and Seymour. "There was a point in the film where the story changed with the merchandising of the plants," he said. "It showed the cuttings being sold in supermarkets all over America. One of the stage songs they eventually didn't use in the film was 'Don't Feed The Plants.' There was a lyric which went . . . 'And begin what they came here to do . . . to eat Cleveland and Des Moines and Peoria and New York.' We worked to that track and showed a plant bursting through a house in Cleveland to tie in with the lyric. Then we cut to New York with Audrey II sitting in the middle of the Brooklyn bridge bouncing up and down with glee while Manhattan burned in the background. The model suspension bridge was 30 feet long and we built it exactly like a real one. Afterwards, two people stood on it which proved how strong it was.

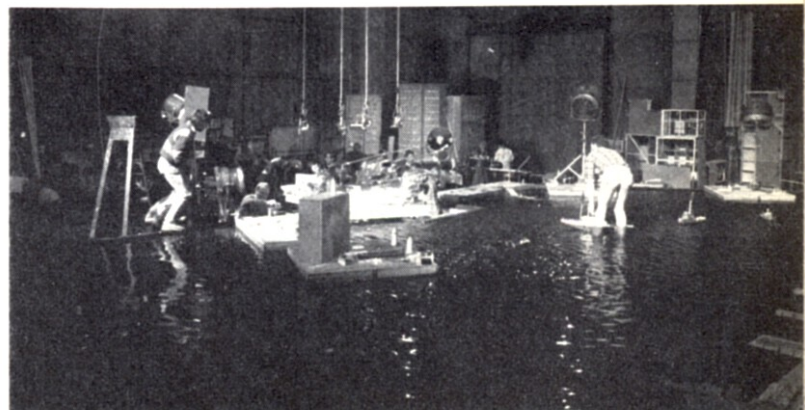
"The plant never attacked anything," continued Conway. "That realm no one wanted to embrace—this being a musical



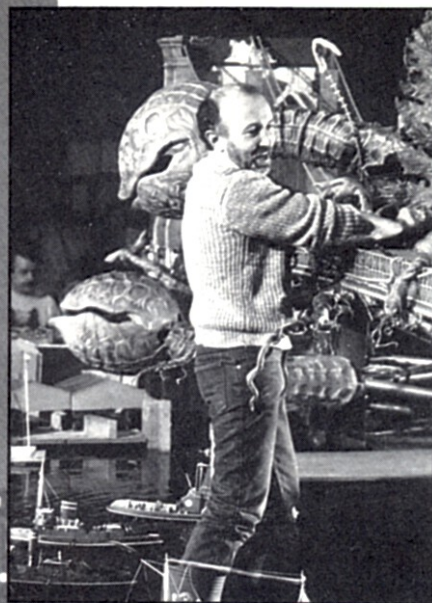
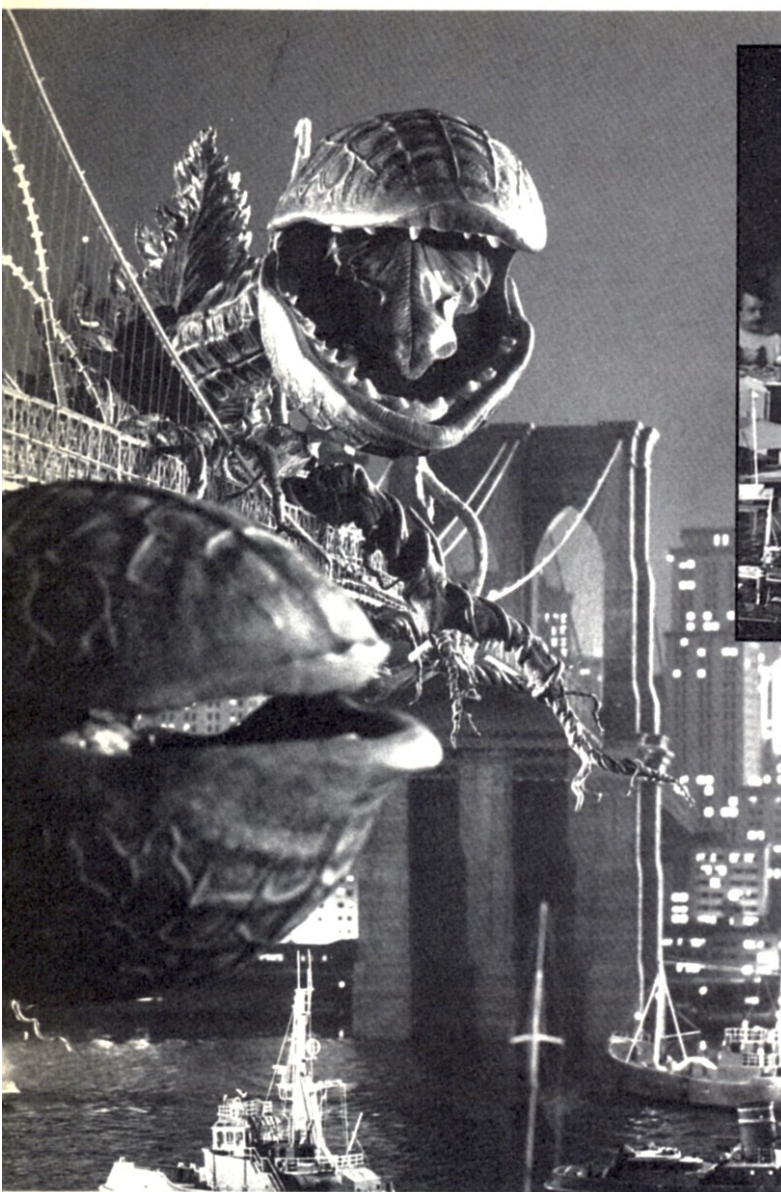
**NEW YORK BURNS** in the background as Audrey II rises from the water of New York harbor. Shown above are the camera's-eye-views of three angles on the foreground miniature which featured a soldier in a mechanized jeep that speeds away as the monster rises. Below: Miniature effects supervisor Richard Conway next to camera behind the foreground miniature during a run-through of the scene. Note slots in miniature for moving vehicles. Bottom: Full shot of the water tank miniature set-up used.

comedy. Then it ate a subway train and destroyed the Roxy theatre playing **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**. We shot the live-action foreground for this effect as well. When you get foreground action and background modelwork there is generally a dead patch in the middle. We overcame this by introducing models of a Hell's Angel on a motorbike, a little man leaning out of a window waving a fist, a van crashing into a lamppost and an ordinary cyclist pedalling out of frame as the plant smashed through the theatre marquee. Our references here were the numerous monster-on-the-loose film posters of the time featuring general mayhem."

In order to create a climax as memorable as the stage one where tendrils descended from the roof of the theatre onto an unsuspecting audience, the idea was to show Audrey II cracking the camera lens in an effort to enter the cinema au-







**THE BRIDGE SEQUENCE** panned from a cackling Audrey II to another of the giant plants under the bridge. One of the technicians (inset) in Richard Conway's miniature effects crew is shown standing in the effects tank at Pinewood, positioning the plant miniatures for filming. Below: Audrey II on the 30 foot long suspension bridge miniature. Cables activating the puppet were run inside the bridge. The four dozen highrise buildings seen in the background were made of sheet steel with window patterns stamped out by computer, a big cost savings.



ditorium. But Conway had nothing to do with that still-born notion. He said, "For a start they weren't sure if they wanted to do it and by that time I had moved on to SUPERMAN IV."

Warner Bros is rumored to be considering making use of the full five minute miniature effects finale in a sequel that is under discussion. The version that was shown to preview audiences had been trimmed by director Frank Oz down to just 2½ minutes. "It was like another movie happening," said Lyle Conway in explaining why the sequence was shortened and then dropped. "It wasn't funny." In the trimming, Oz clipped the beginning and ends of most sequences and dropped the scene altogether where Audrey II crashes through the wall of the Roxy.

To make Audrey II look 60 feet high in the finale meant working with small scale miniatures. "We had about a dozen buildings at 1/24 scale," said Richard Conway. "We constantly revamped them and moved them about, adding different street signs and turning them round as they had three sides. We got lots of setups out of the few models."

Conway used two plants in the sequence, both created by Lyle Conway's department. "They gave us the skins and we put our computer mechanics into them," he said. "They measured 3 feet 6 inches high with the heads about 24 inches

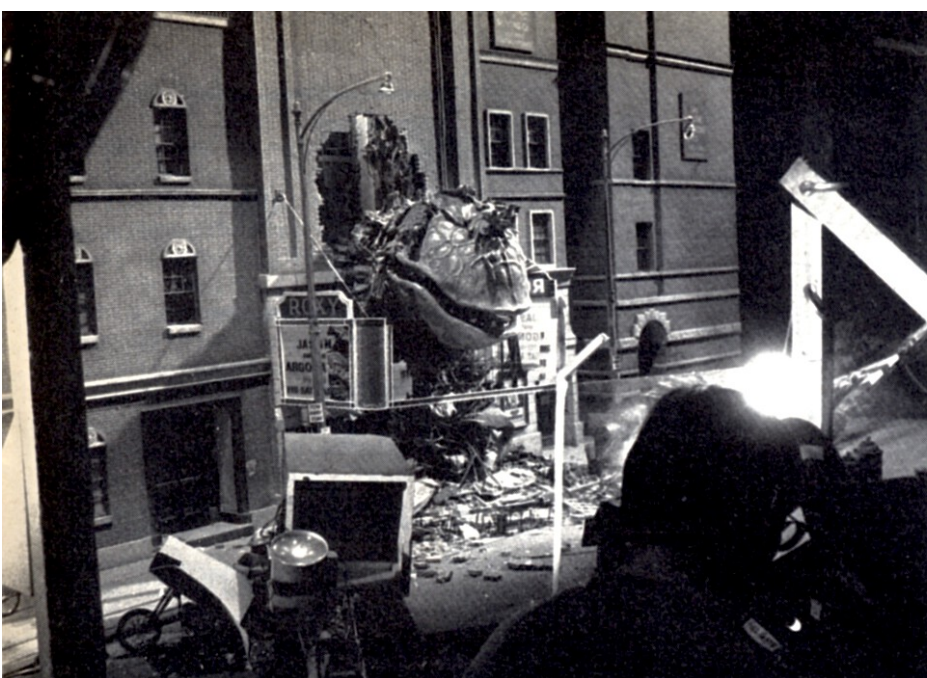
across. They lasted a lot longer than we had expected what with all the general wear and tear. We only reskinned them about four times. Strange stuff, that foam latex. It was difficult to get them looking exactly the same each time and where the mechanisms were attached was a very sensitive area. We avoided reskinning when possible because it took ages to get the lumps out and the right sort of pucker again. But Lyle Conway's work was extraordinary, so it was worth making the effort."

To make the miniature sequences realistic, Conway shot at high speeds of up to 360 frames per second. The movement of the plants had to be speeded-up accordingly. Conway used 120 frames per second for scenes involving the plants, which is five times speed. "We had to program the plant movements at normal speed," he said. "We were able to run that back again going five times as fast in order to slow down all the explosions and other mayhem during filming. It worked very well. Moving the rubber at high speeds meant we got interesting ripple effects which looked like musculature."

The computer-controlled plants were intended to have lip-syncing capabilities. "We were going to try and lip-sync the song at the end," said Conway. "Both plants had built-in servo-hydraulics which went back to a memory able to speed up the movement up to five times. Say we shot at 48 frames—twice speed—we could sync it so when it was played back it was perfect in mouth movement." According to Lyle Conway, however, the lip syncing capabilities of the plant miniatures never materialized. The best that could be achieved was to post-dub a maniacal laugh to the mouth movements for the climactic bridge scene.

**S**top-motion effects were never considered for the plants, according to Richard Conway. "There was no need for it," he said. "I'm not interested in the process, although I have used it on other films. The most ideal way of doing anything is in the camera





**AUDREY II GOES TO THE MOVIES** and crashes a showing of Ray Harryhausen's **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**. Unlike Harryhausen, miniature effects expert Richard Conway filmed all the scenes of *Audrey II* live without resorting to optical effects. Below: Three camera's-eye-views of mechanized miniature action during the sequence. Left: A bicycle rider pedals under the marquee. Middle: A motorcycle rider does a wheelie in front of the show. Right: A truck runs into a lamp post.



first generation. We knocked ourselves out to achieve that because you get a more natural feel. You can't use smoke or rubble falling with stop-motion. It's limitations are the equivalent of walking in concrete boots. I see it as a compromise. It's cheaper and more effective if you do everything in-camera."

The high speed shooting was complicated because Conway had to initiate a lot of long action in a short span of time. An example is one sequence in which the plants walk down a 15-foot Manhattan street, which at normal speed lasts six seconds. Shot at five times normal speed, all the action had to happen in little more than one second.

"Every shot was full of flashing lights, steam, taxi cabs, lampposts, and dustbins on springs to look like the plant was kicking everything out of the way on its journey of destruction," said Conway. "The

camera tracked with all this happening in one second. It involved a hell of a lot of setting-up, with walls collapsing and two helicopters circling timed to spring into action on cue. The problem was we could never show the street. "It all had to be below frame, as you would expect to see hundreds of people scurrying around. We had to give the impression that loads was going on below

the frame."

One way of achieving the maximum amount of footage per set-up was to use different camera angles, according to Conway. "Take the shot we had of one of the plants smashing through a wall," he explained. "One camera angle was high looking down the street with Central Park in the distance in 1/64 scale. The other angle was 90 degrees

straight on the plant, looking up. We built a separate street in 1/12 scale dressing the shot of the other camera. This way we got two shots for the price of one."

Conway and his crew were left very much to themselves during filming. "It's difficult for most people to understand high speed work," he said. "You blink and it's over. The skill comes in stuffing the one second of film with as much action as possible. Lyle Conway used to visit to make sure we weren't allowing the plant to look too tacky. Frank Oz used to come in and look around but invariably he would just walk off scratching his head. He would only criticize at rushes because it wouldn't have been fair otherwise. The person who was around most was Mike Ploog who drew the really excellent storyboards we worked from. He used to come down and operate a lever or two just for fun." □

Model unit supervisor Richard Conway smiles as a complex shot runs perfectly.





# HOUSE II

## THE SECOND STORY

*The producer and writer of the original try to make another killing with whimsical, off-the-wall, soft-core horror.*

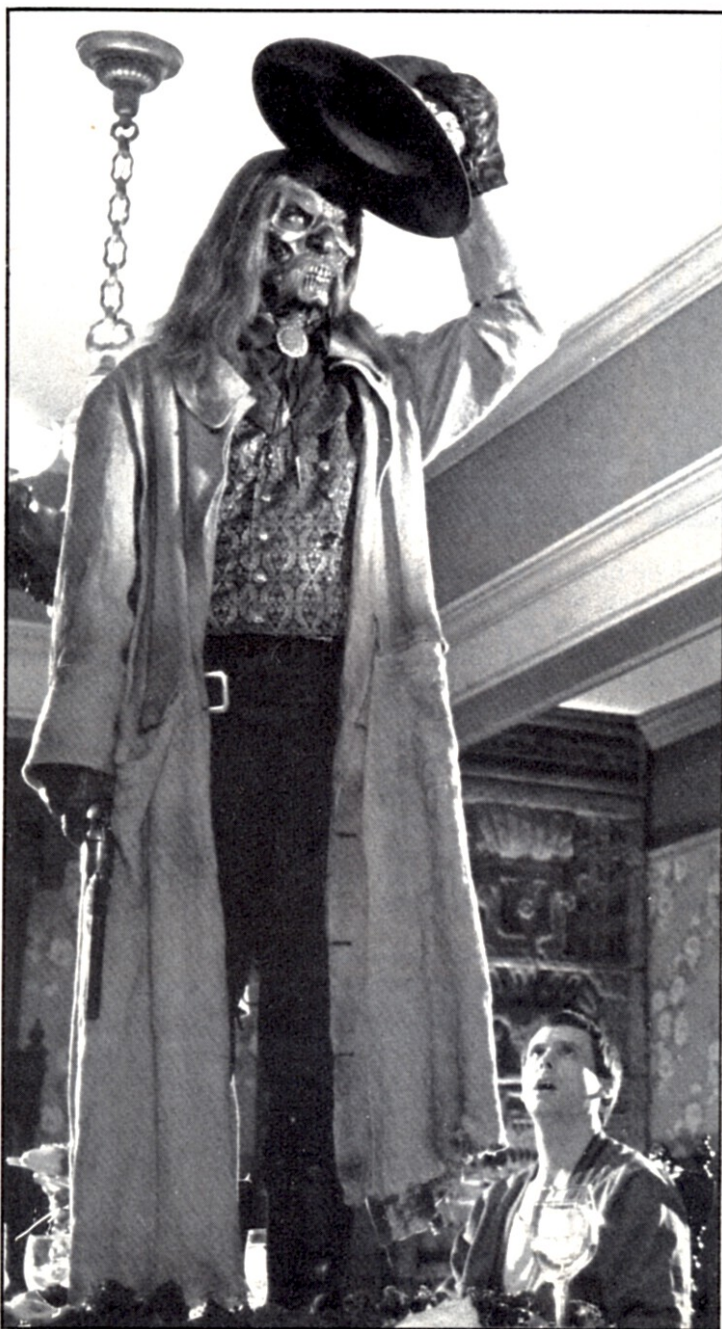
By Alan Jones

"Even before HOUSE was released, it was obvious that it was going to be a hit," said producer Sean S. Cunningham. "Test screenings received very positive responses so we immediately began talks about a sequel or follow-up."

As a result the "For Rent" sign was taken down and HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY began shooting in early August at Laird Studios in Culver City for release by New World Pictures July 24. Written and directed by Ethan Wiley, who co-wrote the first film with Fred Dekker, HOUSE II stars Royal Dano, Jonathan Stark (Chris Sarandon's servant in FRIGHT NIGHT), and John Ratzenberger, who, like George Wendt in the first film, appears in the television sitcom CHEERS. The special effects design is by Oscar-winner Chris Walas—Wiley was one of his puppeteers on GREMLINS—and the cinematographer is Mac Ahlberg who is fast earning a reputation as 'The B-movie's answer to Sven Nykvist.'

Both Cunningham and Wiley decided early to make the new film more than just a sequel that would rehash the original's story with the same actors. Wiley came up with an anthology concept which would retain the style and tone of the first film but with a new story, a new house, and new characters wrapped up in what everyone considered the most successful element of its predecessor—the offbeat humor.

Originally titled HOUSE II:



Charlie (Jonathan Stark) stares in disbelief as a gunfighter from beyond the grave turns an elaborate dinner party into a high noon showdown. Makeup is by Chris Walas.

THE UNEXPECTED, the new film shows what happens when Jesse Laughlin (Arye Gross) and his girlfriend Kate (Lar Park Lincoln) move into his great-great-grandfather's old house for a much needed rest. Gramps, a legendary outlaw in the Old West, supposedly died 70 years earlier. With visions of untold riches due to the priceless artifacts found lying around the mansion, the couple decide to search out his grave. Inside the casket they discover a crystal skull and the mummified corpse of Gramps, who suddenly springs to life in order to give his never seen relative a kiss.

Gramps reveals that the magical skull has kept him alive. It has the power to transform both time and space and bring the dead back to life and make the old young. When the skull is stolen by a mammoth muscle-bound figure at the height of a costume party, Jesse and his friends set off to search for it, with each room of the house representing an alternate universe: a fantasy jungle populated with a brontosaurus, dinosaur skeletons and hideous monsters; a western town complete with zombie gunmen; and an Aztec Temple where a human sacrifice is in full swing.

Producer Cunningham, who will never be able to shake off FRIDAY THE 13TH from his reputation no matter how hard he tries, sees HOUSE and its sequel as the antidote to his trendsetting brand of stalk and slash. Although he still has a monetary interest in the never ending sequels and the planned



television series, all **FRIDAY THE 13TH** meant to Cunningham was the means to get his kids through college.

"I've had it with all these films taking the Pepsi Generation and mutilating them more horribly each time," he said. "My stance in making the first film was to externalize and ritualize the fear of death. I took an audience's darkest fears and made light of them because, yes, you could die in a car crash at any given time and this was a way of dealing with that. However I don't need to deal with it anymore. No one hangs **SPRING BREAK** around my neck like the albatross **FRIDAY THE 13TH** has become. That film more or less kicked off the new wave in teen-oriented comedy. With the **HOUSE** movies I'm getting back into the realm of fairytales which, if the truth be known, I've always wanted to do. I was planning a new version of **HANSEL AND GRETEL** years ago."

It was Wiley's involvement and creativity on **HOUSE** which impressed Cunningham enough to consider him for directing the sequel. "Ethan has a lot of imagination and he also has an impressive background in special effects," said Cunningham. "It was obvious to me that he was the most qualified person to direct as well as script **HOUSE II**. I'm letting him have complete freedom because his script is very good. It draws on the supernatural so it will be terrifying but on the other hand I know Ethan is striving for quirky



One of the doors in **HOUSE II** leads to a prehistoric alternative universe, with stop-motion dinosaurs provided by Phil Tippett.

excitement as well, which is what we all want from this project."

Though the film is Wiley's directorial debut, he has considerable experience behind the camera. "I'm not just a writer moving into production," said Wiley. "Spending nearly two years on **GREMLINS** was probably the best learning experience. I was also very close to the original **HOUSE**. The special effects guys were all friends of mine. Steve Miner [the director of **HOUSE**] was very open and collaborative. He taught me what he was doing and showed

me the approach he was taking at all times. We worked together on the rewrites for **HOUSE**. I thought ahead a lot at the time, envisioning a **HOUSE II**."

In many ways, **HOUSE** spearheaded a return to "soft" horror, but Wiley isn't apologetic on that score. "My personal approach to this series has been to make it an exploration of fantasy rather than just the hardcore gore approach which has been done to death," he said. "What I wanted to do with **HOUSE** was bring back a little class to the genre. As long as what an audience sees is entertaining, I don't think there is a strong demand for blood. If I was making **FRIDAY THE 13TH PART VII** then it would be different, but I would only consider **HOUSE II** to be 'soft' if nothing happened in it."

Making the **HOUSE** series an anthology rather than a continuation was Wiley's idea. "I had no interest in going back to the same house with the same rooms and the same props," he said. "William Katt's story had been told and there was a feeling of completeness about it. To carry on with it would have been boring. I would not be in this studio today if it had been decided to go that route. It was far more interesting in my

mind to create a pattern where we could go to a whole new house and tell a new story with new characters but retain the tone of the first with comedy-laced fantasy. If people go and see **HOUSE III** it will be because we have established a precedent with the first two. We won't spring any surprises by suddenly doing a heavy drama or an out and out comedy as it isn't what the audience expects."

The hook for the second film, where rooms unexpectedly lead to other times and dimensions, came directly from **HOUSE**. "Steve Miner and I kicked around ideas about how to make the sequel more surprising than the first," said Wiley. "We always returned to the fact that in the first movie, whenever someone opened a door, you never knew who or what to expect behind it. Was it going to be scary or funny? I knew I wanted to retain that feeling."

"It is getting harder to entertain a more sophisticated audience with this genre, but that's precisely the point of **HOUSE II** as far as I'm concerned. I didn't want to rely on shock cuts. I'm very conscious of developing the characters rather than have something

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Ethan Wiley, writer and director of the sequel, poses in front of **HOUSE II**.





# MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

## The cartoon and merchandising phenomenon comes to the screen in an Earthbound adventure.

By Kris Gilpin

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, based on the popular Mattel toys, was shot on location near the Grand Canyon during the summer of 1986. The production came in slightly over budget, at about \$20 million after studio interiors were completed in Los Angeles. "Our objective was to make a film for the general movie-going audience," said producer Edward R. Pressman. "To overcome the stigma of it being a toy was clearly a critical factor."

The long on-the-boards project (14:4:14), first proposed by Pressman at Universal, will be released nationwide by Cannon Films on August 7. Warner Bros declined its option to release the film June 19 as part of a \$75 million bailout that saved Cannon from bankruptcy. "The production was very difficult," said Pressman. "We're dealing with the most expensive feature Cannon has ever made."

Making his feature film directing debut on MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE is Gary Goddard, the head of Landmark Entertainment, a company which designs live shows and theme park attractions, including the current Masters Of The Universe Power Tour. "Goddard's work was very impressive," said Pressman about his reasons for hiring the director. "His live shows were very complicated projects which required an understanding of effects, and displayed imagination at trying things which had never been done before. And I was looking for someone who



Meg Foster as Evil-Lyn, second in command to villain Skeletor, holds the Cosmic Key which allows the superheroes of Eternia to base their adventures on Earth.

would bring to this project a new vision, and advance the genre in some way—taking it seriously and not looking down on it. I'm always looking for something that pushes the medium."

Goddard was thrilled to have a fantasy as the subject of his first feature. Not every novice filmmaker is given a \$20 million budget. "There are directors who would cringe at

even thinking of doing a film like this," said the 34 year-old director. "So much of it is technical, with blue screens and smoke and wire work, contact lenses and pyrotechnics. On that level, it was almost insane to do it. On the other hand, no challenge is ever big enough for me."

Goddard has always been a big fan of science fiction and fantasy. At age 28 he wrote Bo

Derek's TARZAN, THE APE MAN and an unproduced parody entitled SPACE COMMANDOS. His Landmark company designed the live CONAN, 2010, and KING KONG shows for Universal's studio tour. Goddard has also penned a "science fiction version of the THE TEN COMMANDMENTS" called AGAINST THE GODS, also yet to be produced, as are Goddard's scripts for MERMERE (an underwater, Atlantis-type project) and CHILDREN OF MERLIN, which actually led to his being chosen to direct MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE.

As expected, the director found working with special effects on MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE to be "a nightmare," he said. "On a fantasy film you have to create every set, every prop and everything a character wears. It's a lot to do! It's a carnival of decisions and confusion every day. And when you're on the set, nothing's easy—you have smoke or explosions going off or guys in masks who can't breathe—and nothing works. It's how clever you can be to get your shot to work."

Goddard emphasized that the script for MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE by co-producer David Odell (THE MUPPET MOVIE) tried to keep the essence of the toy and cartoon characters while reaching for a bigger audience. "We didn't limit ourselves to the parameters of the cartoon show," said Goddard. "We tried to make a picture that not only kids like but adults would enjoy, too."





Skeletor (inset), played by Frank Langella, enters the throne room of Eternia, a dazzling matte shot conceived by production designer William Stout and realized by Richard Edlund's Boss Film company. But why do all the palace guards wear helmets and costumes that make them look like Darth Vader from STAR WARS?

The costume designs are all new, for instance. On the other hand, we didn't put anything in our story which would conflict with the existing story the kids knew. To make it different we didn't set the story out in space but thought, 'What would happen if these mythic figures were suddenly transplanted to contemporary America.' Earth becomes a battleground between these larger-than-life forces and Earth kids get intertwined in it."

Playing He-Man, the movie's muscle-bound hero, is Dolph Lundgren the Russian boxer of ROCKY IV. "My biggest job with Lundgren was to get him to let his friendly side come out in front of the camera," said Goddard. Skeletor, the villain

of the piece is played by DRACULA's Frank Langella. "I felt Skeletor had to be someone who had a theatrical sense," said Goddard, who was impressed with Langella in a performance of "Amadeus." "The character was going to wear heavy makeup and I wanted someone who could bring a performance through that. Also, I wanted an actor with a sense of style who knew how to move in an extensive costume, with a cape. Langella had all that classical training which he brought to the part."

Veteran midget actor Billy Barty plays Gwildor, an innocent locksmith/inventor thrown into the adventure when an invention he creates inadvertently gives Skeletor his power.

Billy Barty as imp scientist Gwildor in makeup by Oscar-winner Michael Westmore. Gwildor's Cosmic Key inadvertently exposes the Earth to the ravages of Skeletor.



"The character is buried beneath makeup, so we needed a performer with energy and wit to transcend that," said Goddard about his reasons for casting Barty. "His comic flair added a great deal to the role." Barty proved to be inventive on the set, improvising dialogue and action not found in the script.

It was Meg (THE EMERALD FOREST) Foster's stunning, almost hypnotic, eyes that helped win her the part of sorceress Evilyn. "I don't think anyone has played a sorceress like Foster," said Goddard. "I hope her character will prove as indelible in the minds of the kids who see this picture as the Evil Queen from SNOW WHITE was to us when we were kids."

Though Goddard insists he avoided camp at all costs in directing MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, some unintentional laughter was heard to break out on the set during filming. Actress Courtney

Cox, who plays Julie, an 18 year-old who gets caught up with the larger-than-life characters, remembered one line that repeatedly broke her up on the set. In the scene Cox is bleeding from a leg wound inflicted by Skeletor as imp scientist Gwildor (Billy Barty) formulates a plan to get back to the planet Eternia with warriors Teela (Chelsea Field) and the Man-At-Arms (John Cypher). Said Cox, "I've got this huge scar on my leg and Gwildor says, 'We're gonna need a couple things, like an octone rectifier.' And Cypher says, 'I've got my octone rectifier right here!' We all laughed so hard just at the name of it. There I was, supposedly dying, and I couldn't stop laughing."

Chelsea Field who plays Teela, He-Man's sidekick indicated that a number of her fight scenes went out the window when the filming began to run behind schedule and over

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# REVIEWS

## Breathes powerful new life into the static slasher horror genre

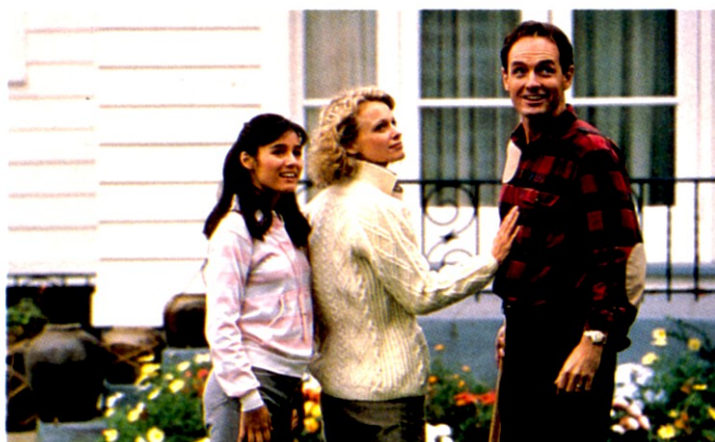
### THE STEPFATHER

A New Century/Vista release of an ITC Productions film. 2/87, 98 mins. In color. Director, Joseph Ruben. Producer, Jay Benson. Screenplay, Donald E. Westlake. Story, Carolyn Lefcourt, Brian Garfield, & Westlake. Director of photography, John Lindley. Production designer, James William Newport. Editor, George Bowers. Art director, David Willson. Costume designer, Mina Mittelman. Storyboards, Len Morganti. Music composed & performed by Patrick Moraz.

Jerry Blake..... Terry O'Quinn  
Stephanie Maine..... Jill Schoelen  
Susan Blake..... Shelley Hack  
Dr. Bondurant..... Charles Lanyer  
Jim Ogilvie..... Stephen Shellen

by Rob Winning

THE STEPFATHER opens much like any other "slasher" film. The camera hovers ominously above a quiet, suburban street and then, as if taking on a life of its own, it cranes left to the second story window of a white frame house. There is an old, boarded-up house where a grisly tragedy once took place. There is also a dark stranger who returns to that house looking for answers and vengeance. The protagonist of the film is a teenage girl who becomes the focus of the threat which hovers throughout the story. There is even the obligatory shower sequence in which the teenage protagonist seems destined to meet her fated end. How-



Jill Schoelen, Shelley Hack, and Terry O'Quinn, family bliss cum nightmare.

ever, the similarities between THE STEPFATHER and other slasher films begin and end with this set of conventions.

The story into which these conventions are woven is so complete and compelling that the generic tradition from which it all springs is all but forgotten by the viewer. At every step and conventional turn in the story the actors and filmmakers bring a level of nuance to what has become a static form. There is never any question, for

example, who the psychopathic killer is in the film. There are none of the customary random killings of teenage girls by a psycho concealed behind a goalie's mask or physical deformity. Never is the killer's identity hidden behind subjective camera movements or placement. Never is there any of the visual complicity between the viewer and the psycho which is a hallmark of these films. What THE STEPFATHER has instead of the narrative gimmicks of the

genre is a tightly conceived, tension-filled, up-front storyline scripted by Donald E. Westlake.

With so many of its cards on the table from the very beginning, the film relies primarily on the subtleties of character development and storytelling to keep the audience engaged until its terrifying conclusion. Terry O'Quinn's portrayal of the stepfather and the actor's ability to embrace the disintegration of the character makes THE STEPFATHER the truly scary film that it is. O'Quinn's ability to almost instantaneously transform from concerned, composed parent, to unbalanced and irrational is the single most chilling aspect of the film.

Though THE STEPFATHER seems to emphasize character development and storytelling over cheap thrills, there is also the requisite amount of violence and gore. The deft direction of Joseph Ruben thrusts the film a full head and shoulders above recent entries into this once favored sub-genre of the horror film. THE STEPFATHER takes a well-worn formula and the most recognizable conventions and breathes powerful new life into them. □

## BBC refilms Wyndham science fiction classic

### THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

A BBC production in association with RCTV Inc., & the Australian Broadcasting Commission. 1981, 290 mins. In color. Director, Ken Hannam. Producer, David Maloney. Adapted from John Wyndham's 1951 novel. Film cameraman, Peter Hall. Senior studio cameraman, Ken Major. Film editor, Dick Allen. Video editor, Stan Pow. Production designer, Victor Meredith. Makeup, Ann Ailes. Costumes, Rita Reekie. Visual effects supervisor, Steve Drewett. Vision mixer, Bill Morton.

Bill Masen..... John Duttine  
Jack Coker..... Maurice Colbourne  
Beasley..... David Swift  
Jo Payton..... Emma Relp  
Torrence..... Gary Olsen  
Miss Durant..... Perilla Neilson  
Vicar..... Christopher Owen  
Young Susan..... Emily Dean

by Sheldon Teitelbaum

There was little left of British writer John Wyndham and his middle-class sensibilities in the 1963 screen adaptation of his once popular novel, *The Day Of The Triffids*. This joint BBC-Australian Broadcasting Commission remake, first screened in 1981, is

now appearing on public television as a three-part mini-series, and does a better job of it. It is a faithful adaptation of a minor science fiction classic, one which, sadly, hasn't weathered well in the last 36 years or so since it first ran in *Colliers*.

No one ever credited Wyndham with an excess of originality to begin with. His novels became popular because he used American pulp conventions to explore the ideas of H. G. Wells. Consequently, they seemed fresh and vigorous and may, in fact, have established some conventions of their own. Certainly the so-called British New Wave of the '60s would not have progressed quite as it did without Wyndham to provide the impetus to rebellion.

Conventions, however, have a nasty way of turning into clichés.

This production, through no fault of its own save a properly reverential attitude toward its source, doesn't do much in the way of updating them. The premise is about as unlikely as you can get. One night, what appears to be a meteor shower but is more likely some sinister orbital weapon malfunction, causes worldwide blindness. Some people manage to avoid seeing the spectacle, but there are not enough of them to prevent the breakdown of civilization.

Concurrently, mankind is subjected to a scourge of carrion-eating, quasi-intelligent ambulatory plants that can easily fell a man from 10 paces with their stingers. These plants, triffids, were genetically engineered by the Soviets as a source of cheap petrol additives.

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Bill (John Duttine) and Jo (Emma Relp) recoil in horror from one of the Triffids, ambulatory killer plants.



## Director Joseph Ruben on the making of THE STEPFATHER

By Dennis Fischer

THE STEPFATHER opened quietly, almost unnoticed in most of the markets it played in, caused a great commotion among a few people and then quietly slipped out again, much like its title character. While the critics raved, putting the film on more than a few ten best lists, THE STEPFATHER strangely failed to connect with the horror/thriller/suspense market. However, ITC Prods., which made THE STEPFATHER and New Century/Vista which released it aren't giving up, opening the film in new markets and altering the original, ineffective advertising campaign.

According to director Joseph Ruben, THE STEPFATHER started when Donald Westlake "saw a small article . . . about a guy in New Jersey who murdered his family and set up a new life in another town." The film's story is credited to Carolyn Lefcourt, Brian Garfield (DEATHWISH), and Westlake, a well-respected writer of thrillers who also writes under the names Richard Stark, Curt Clark, Tucker Coe, and Timothy J. Culver. Westlake's books *The Hot Rock* and *Bank*, among others, have been made into films, while Westlake himself has worked on such projects as COPS AND ROBBERS, HOT STUFF, and SUPERTRAIN. An adaptation of his story "Nackles," led to Harlan Ellison leaving the

Terry O'Quinn as the stepfather.

new TWILIGHT ZONE TV series.

Westlake's work is noted for its sly sense of humor and that is very much evident in his work for THE STEPFATHER, for which he wrote the final screenplay. "Westlake just has a very wicked sense of humor and irony," said Ruben. "You get that tone in a lot of his novels. That was one aspect I found attractive about this movie. We added more humor. Westlake never meant for this to be a naturalistic or case study. What I envisioned was always kind of a rock 'n' roll movie—stylized where you would hopefully have something very funny and something very scary right on top of each other, and the audience would be off balance. I wanted the last reel or two to be a complete roller coaster."

ITC Productions committed themselves to making the film and searched about for a director. Someone there had seen Ruben's DREAMSCAPE (15:24) and was very impressed with it. "I came on just before production was starting," said Ruben. "We all knew, including Don Westlake, the writer, that the script needed a lot of work. I had a lot to do with adding new elements and scenes with Westlake in nine weeks of preproduction."

The added scenes included stronger endings that Ruben wanted for the film's first two acts. With Westlake, Ruben came up with the scene to end act one where Terry O'Quinn as the stepfather is spied by stepdaughter Stephanie (Jill Schoelen) having a tantrum in his basement workshop, the first time he is seen to lose control. To end the second act the scene where stepfather Jerry Blake catches Stephanie kissing her boyfriend was devised to trigger his decision to do away with his new family and start over again.

The film opens with the aftermath of a tragedy as O'Quinn cleans up after killing his family and is about to leave and start the cycle over again somewhere else. "The trickiest problem for me was how graphic the violence would be," said Ruben. "The opening where he walks downstairs and we discover the whole family dead I'd always seen as one shot starting tight on him and widening as you crane down the stairs to reveal



Joseph Ruben directs O'Quinn for the film's opening scene of domestic carnage.

everything. We shot it and I wasn't sure if I was being too graphic or not. I had the cameraman, John Lindley, darken it, take out some light, and make it even more subtle.

"For some people I know we went too far," continued Ruben. "Although most of the violence in the movie is really not onscreen, such as when Jerry two-by-fours the doctor. There is only one shot where you actually see the board hitting the doctor, but there's a feeling of tremendous violence. But this was a movie about violence to some extent, so I felt to play it too subtle would be cheating. I think a movie like this has to have a lot of impact. If you go too far the other way, you're being faint-hearted. That for me was the toughest problem."

The first alteration Ruben made in Westlake's script was changing the character of an investigating policeman into the brother of the wife stepfather Jerry Blake had killed in the film's opening. "I wanted Blake's pursuer to have real passion," said Ruben. "I wanted him sort of crazed. I felt that this character should be just obsessed to the point where it's his fate to follow this succession of clues and end up right there as the killings are just about to start again."

Ruben also came up with the idea of Blake off-handedly killing the brother just as he shows up to make his rescue. In the script it had been an extraneous character that stumbled onto the climactic violence. "I just love the idea of setting up

the expectation for the audience that he's coming to the rescue," said Ruben. "When we screen it for audiences they are cheering for the guy. They fully expect him to come and save the day, and then—bam!—the stepfather gets the drop on him. It made Jerry Blake so much more formidable and Stephanie so much more vulnerable having the guy you think is going to save her wiped out like that."

Ruben originally sought name actors to take the Stepfather role but found that no one was interested. "All the actors we approached were afraid of the role," he said. "It was too extreme. I think they were concerned about being typecast the way that Anthony Perkins was after PSYCHO."

Ruben began looking for good character actors and hit on Terry O'Quinn. In his first audition O'Quinn read the scene where Blake is upset to hear an unsuspecting guest at a barbecue read a newspaper account of his earlier crime, and folds up the paper, turning it into a hat for a little boy. "He mimed folding the hat and I could 'see' the imaginary hat," said Ruben. "He was that specific and physically sure of himself as he did the action. Even though that isn't related at all to what you have to do as a screen actor, I just knew he was a good one. Every time I looked at him, I just felt better and better that this was the right guy. He was very good-looking, but it's the kind of good-looking that blends in. He was someone

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## Mark Shostrom on the makeup effects of EVIL DEAD 2

By Jim Clark

When makeup effects expert Mark Shostrom saw *THE EVIL DEAD* in 1984, he was so impressed he got in touch with producer Rob Tapert and let him know that he would be enthusiastic to work on any sequel. Tapert agreed to contact Shostrom if an *EVIL DEAD 2* ever materialized. "This is the only time that I've made an effort to work on a particular movie that's panned out," said Shostrom. "And I'm really glad it did."

Shostrom began creating special makeup effects for *EVIL DEAD 2* in March, 1986, taking six weeks to prepare for a May shoot, working with a crew of eleven. According to Shostrom, of the 700 shots in the film, over 120 are special makeup effects shots.

Shostrom has created impressive makeup effects for a number of horror films, including *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET*, *PARTS 2 & 3*, *FROM BEYOND*, and *ANDROID*. Shostrom's crew on *EVIL DEAD 2* included Greg Nicotero, Howard Berger, Mike Tricic, Aaron Sims, Shanon Shea, Robert Kurtzman, and stop-motion animators Rick Catizone and Doug Beswick.

Shostrom's main makeup task was the creation of Henrietta, the corpse of the professor's wife that comes back to life in the cabin's cellar. The makeup was applied to Ted

Henrietta's "Pee Wee" head style, sculpted and painted by Shostrom, with mechanics by Dave Kindlon.



Makeup supervisor Mark Shostrom (l) and assistant Robert Kurtzman with Ted Raimi, brother of the director, in makeup as the possessed Henrietta.

Raimi, younger brother of the director. The costume consisted of twenty-eight separate pieces and covered 100 percent of Raimi's body. It took seven hours to apply. Then Raimi would have to act in front of the cameras, often for an additional twelve hours. When the cameras stopped rolling, Shostrom would begin the laborious, and delicate, process of removing the Henrietta makeup. Those were long days! For the scene where Henrietta's neck grows to the unseemly length of six feet, Shostrom designed and built a mechanical neck and head, combined with stop-motion effects.

Howard Berger created the demonic, Mr. Hyde-like makeup seen by Ash when he looks into a mirror. The effect was achieved entirely in-camera, using a photo double of actor Bruce Campbell. Mike Tricic did the makeup for Linda, Ash's girlfriend who rises headless from her grave and does a dance, a stop-motion segment by Doug Beswick.

Shostrom designed and built a creepily lifelike radio-controlled hand, for the sequence where Ash cuts off his own hand. After Raimi was through shooting Shostrom's electronic hand, stop-motion animator Rick Catizone used the same sets to film an animated hand. Footage of both effects were intercut in the final picture.

A "Pee Wee Head" effect for the film was named by Shostrom after the scene in *PEE WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE*

in which female truck driver Large Marge suddenly transforms herself into something unspeakable. When the illusion was added during the final days of production, Shostrom had to call in associate Bryant Tausek, who flew down to the North Carolina locations from New York. With Shostrom, Tausek designed and manufactured two heads which were made out of gelatin. Tausek rigged the heads with explosives for the erupting "Pee Wee Head" effect.

Summing up the philosophy of special effects on *EVIL DEAD 2*, Mark Shostrom noted that, "There is actually very little blood in the film. But there's a hell of a lot of green vomit." In fact, one of the special effects crew's favorite pastimes was testing the picture's many vomit effects. "We tested the vomit out on each other," he laughed. "We were all very fond of Bruce Campbell, but I think the crew's favorite moment came when they got to shoot a four-quart syringe of bile straight at him. He realized, of course, that he had to suffer for his art and took the entire experience very well."

After their work for the day was finally complete, Shostrom and his crew shot *EVIL DEAD* parodies with a super Beta video camera. They would edit footage from the original film and shoot their own takeoffs. A few times, they were able to persuade Bruce Campbell to reprise his role as Ash for what Shostrom affectionately called "our stupid movies." □

## Avoids the dry rot which curses many Part Twos

### EVIL DEAD 2

A Rosebud Releasing presentation of a Renaissance Pictures production. 3/87, 85 mins. In color. Director, Sam Raimi. Producer, Robert G. Tapert. Screenplay by Raimi & Scott Spiegel. Director of photography, Peter Deming. Night photography, Eugene Shlugleit. Special makeup, Mark Shostrom. Art directors, Philip Duffin & Randy Benett. Set decorator, Elizabeth Moore. Set dresser, Wayne Leonard. Sound, Tom Morrison. Assistant director, Joseph Winogradoff.

Ash	Bruce Campbell
Annie	Sarah Berry
Jake	Dan Hicks
Bobby Joe	Kassie Wesley
Possessed Henrietta	Theodore Raimi
Linda	Denise Bixler
Ed	Richard Domeier
Professor	John Peaks

by Thomas Doherty

"Slaphappy splatter" is the best way to describe the Cinema of Gore in its baroque phase. Tension and terror are subordinated to a free-form gross-out featuring modest innovations in prosthetics, more flesh than the meat locker in *ROCKY*, and the improvisational spirit of an adolescent boy considering a cat, a lawnmower, and the possibilities. Funny thing, though: for all their blood-stained *grand guignol* theatrics, the comic book horror and cheap humor of a *RE-ANIMATOR* or *TOXIC AVENGER* seems somehow wholesome compared to some of the more, shall we say, documentary items at the videostore. At heart, gorehounds are like those ditsy matrons who always show up in Hitchcock movies clucking over the best way to kill a husband. This brand of Dead Heads cheer the special effects work and gags appreciatively at a clever evisceration, relinquishing the market for real-life fatalities to the *FACES OF DEATH* sickos.

Very much in this ghouls-on-film mold, *EVIL DEAD 2* is a real hoot. In 1983, filmmakers Sam Raimi, Robert G. Tapert, and Bruce Campbell came out of nowhere—well, Detroit actually—to concoct *THE EVIL DEAD*, a low-budget, high-grossing gore-fest that gave George Romero good reason to look over his shoulder. The current follow-up, wryly billed as "the sequel to the ultimate experience in grueling terror," is blessed with a bigger budget and a more seasoned crew, but it avoids the dry rot which curses so many

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## Co-producer and star Bruce Campbell on the making of EVIL DEAD 2

By Paul Gordon

Actor and co-producer Bruce Campbell, who plays the lead in *EVIL DEAD 2*, a sequel to independent filmmaker Sam Raimi's horror sleeper, *THE EVIL DEAD*, said that the trick in making the new film was getting people who loved working in the genre. Why not hire the best, like makeup artist Tom Savini (*MARTIN, DAY OF THE DEAD*)? "Well, first of all, he is too expensive," 28 year-old Campbell said. "He's not as hungry as the other guys are."

"You can get those big name guys, but what they do is cruise through," he said. "They don't do as much personalized work nowadays. They're big shots. They will only do design work. We wanted someone who was dying to cut his teeth on it. And Mark Shostrom, who did *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2* and *FROM BEYOND*, was really pumped up about it."

During production, the filmmakers said that the DeLaurentiis Entertainment Group, the film's financier, had stipulated that the film had to be shot for an R-rating [17:34:92]. Though the filmmakers obviously chomped at the ratings bit during filming, Campbell said they also wanted to do some toning-down from the first picture. "That really gory stuff in *THE EVIL DEAD* would chase people out of the theatres," he said. "This time we wanted to try to keep everybody in, to push it to the edge, but still have viewers be able to recommend it to their friends."

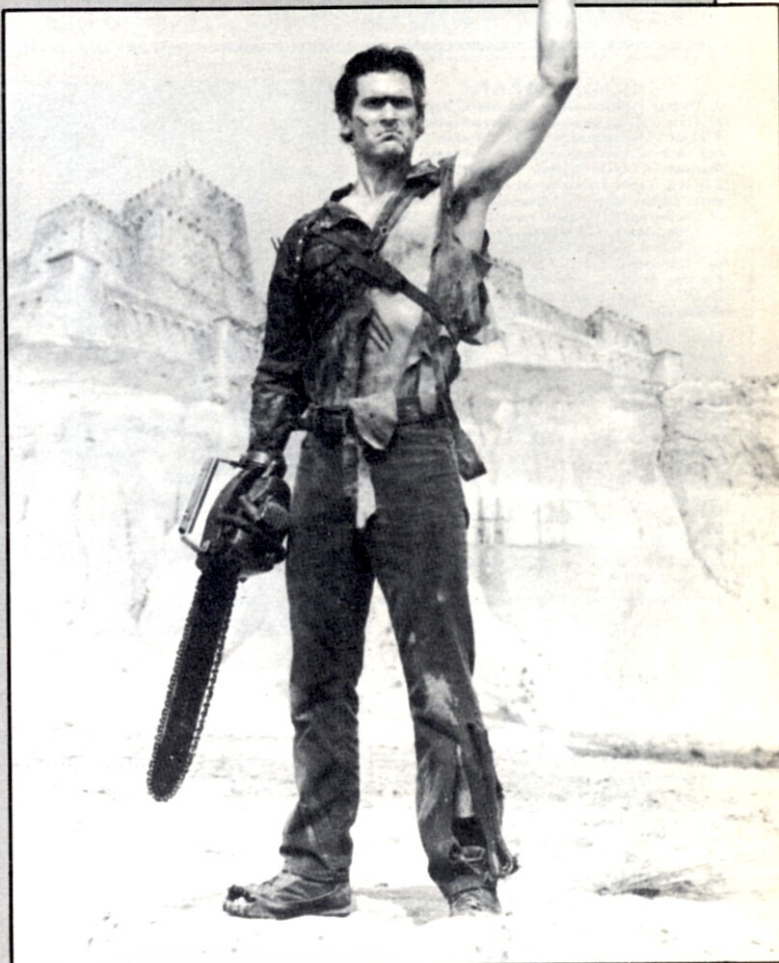
Though the gore was sup-

posedly toned-down a bit, *EVIL DEAD 2* still had to be released without a rating, like its predecessor. DEG was unable to handle the film's distribution because they are members of the MPAA and thus duty-bound to submit their product to the ratings system. Rosebud Releasing Corp., a thinly veiled DEG subsidiary, handled the film's regional distribution because Campbell and his Renaissance Pictures partners, director Sam Raimi and producer Robert G. Tapert, didn't want to deal with the ratings board. DEG president of Marketing and Distribution Larry Gleason indicated that the decision was mutual.

"We didn't have the time or the money, based on the scheduling, to play the ratings game, to keep submitting it and submitting it," said Campbell. "When you submit it you have to cut this so you can show it to them again so you can cut that and go back and forth to get an R-rating. What's bad about it is that some newspapers and other media won't handle advertisements for an unrated film. You can't do a national, 1,300 theatre blitz. But your advertising channels open up as soon as you get better word of mouth."

Campbell said the cast and crew of the film worked like dogs, spending two years preparing it for release. Many of its complex visual effects required extensive changes during post production. "We have a scene where the cabin floods," said Campbell. "There's a blood flood, where it's gushing from the walls. It didn't have the impact we wanted initially." So

Ted Raimi in makeup by Mark Shostrom, poses on the set with his brother, director Sam Raimi. Dark glasses protect from the glare of white contacts.



In the sequel, Ash (Bruce Campbell) becomes a kind of shotgun toting, chainsaw wielding, superhero styled on the Spaghetti westerns of Sergio Leone.

the set was rebuilt on its side.

Raimi and Campbell were dissatisfied with the monstrous creature seen at the film's finale. Doubts didn't surface until they got the creation on the set. They felt it didn't look hideous enough to be in harmony with the rest of the production. Raimi devised an unusual cinematographic solution on the spot to make it look weirder. "Raimi had this anamorphic lens which warped and stretched-out the image," said Campbell. "Since the projection system isn't anamorphic, you get this squished image. Of course, sound effects helped too."

The complex effects work slowed the film's postproduction and made for a hectic workload in editing the film and dubbing sound for its scheduled release. "Often times we were putting sound effects to blank images because the effects weren't done yet," said Campbell. All of the monsters' voices were replaced or somehow

altered with other vocalizations, many of which were done by Raimi, himself. "Sam played a lot of monsters because he's such a ham," laughed Campbell.

Though the film was made for DEG, technically a "mini-major," Campbell said that the production was left pretty much to its own devices. Working independent of the studio system has always been a treat for Campbell. "You have more of an opportunity to pretty much relish the making of the picture," he said. "You don't have people on the set telling you what you can and can't do."

Campbell is rightly proud of what he and his Renaissance Pictures partners were able to accomplish on the film, working with a small budget. "This sequel is definitely glossier, more consistent and the lighting is better," he said. "Director Sam Raimi's much more familiar with cameras now. He's much more astute and his angles are wilder than ever." □



## William Hjortsberg's thriller is filmed badly by Alan Parker

### ANGEL HEART

A Tri-Star Pictures release of a Mario Kassar and Andrew Vajna/Carolco Intl. presentation of a Winkast-Union production. 3/87, 113 mins. In color and Dolby. Director, Alan Parker. Producers, Alan Marshall, & Elliott Kastner. Executive producers, Kassar & Vajna. Screenplay by Parker based on the novel "Falling Angel" by William Hjortsberg. Director of photography, Michael Seresin. Editor, Gerry Hambling. Music, Trevor Jones. Production designer, Brian Morris. Art directors, Kristi Zea & Armin Ganz. Set decorators, Robert J. Franco & Leslie Pope. Costume designer, Aude Bronson-Howard. Sound, Danny Michael. Assistant director, Ric Kidney. Casting, Risa Bramon & Billy Hopkins.

Harry Angel	Mickey Rourke
Louis Cyphre	Robert DeNiro
Epiphany Proudfoot	Lisa Bonet
Margaret Krusemark	Charlotte Rampling
Ethan Krusemark	Stocker Fontelleu
Toots Sweet	Brownie McGhee
Doctor Fowler	Michael Higgins
Connie	Elizabeth Whitcraft
Sterne	Elliott Keener
Spider Simpson	Charles Gordone
Winesap	Dann Florek
Nurse	Kathleen Wilhoite
Izzy	George Buck
Izzy's Wife	Judith Drake
Pastor John	Gerald L. Orange
Mammy Carter	Peggy Severe

by Kyle Counts

As one might expect of a filmmaker who began his career in advertising, Alan Parker—like fellow Briton Ridley Scott—is a director who is often stronger on style than substance. Long a whipping boy of the press, Parker has practically made a second career of taking pot shots at what he terms the "Sight and Sound mafia"—intellects and critics—whom he feels are singularly prejudiced against his background in television commercials. (His shot-for restaging of a scene from *BRIEF ENCOUNTER* for *Birds-*

Director Alan Parker on location in New Orleans, next to the devilish 666 address that pops up often in the film.



Mickey Rourke as fifties New York gumshoe Harry Angel in *ANGEL HEART*.

eye is a classic.)

But while his detractors continually decry his solemn worldview (*MIDNIGHT EXPRESS*, *SHOOT THE MOON*) and reliance upon heavy-handed pyrotechnics (typified by his shrill full-length video, *PINK FLOYD—THE WALL*), others have praised his vivacity and startling command of the technical language of film.

Which brings us to Parker's latest work, *ANGEL HEART*, an \$18 million adaptation of William Hjortsberg's thriller *Falling Angel*, which first appeared in 1978 in *Playboy* magazine. Hjortsberg's novel is a rollicking good read, a '30s-style private eye story with satanic overtones, replete with tongue-in-cheek Bogey-isms ("What he did to Spider was lower than Benedict Arnold's jockstrap"), quizzical characters and deft plot twists. The paperback edition of the book reprints a prophetic quote from a review in the *Florida Times-Union and Jacksonville Journal*: "... if some smart producer doesn't make a movie out of it, Hollywood is missing a good bet."

Well, Alan Marshall is the producer who brought the property to the screen, but how smart he was in doing so is a matter open to debate. What with the charismatic Mickey Rourke as Angel (flanked by Robert DeNiro, in a "Special Appearance"), and Hjortsberg's stylishly macabre storyline as its basis, *ANGEL HEART* would seem to have a head start on being one helluva

crackerjack movie—sort of Raymond Chandler meets *THE EXORCIST*, as Stephen King has called the book. Further, Parker once again has benefit of the services of two of his ever-reliable stable of craftsmen—cinematographer Michael Seresin and editor Gerry Hambling—as well as production designer Brian Morris and composer Trevor Jones to lend able support.

The result, unfortunately, is Parker's worst critical nightmare: a technically sumptuous, bizarrely baroque jambalaya that is meretricious without being the least bit fun. It may be merely a reflection of Hjortsberg's novel that the film is so cold and detached, but Parker, adapting the novel himself, makes things worse by stripping the characters of any likeability and laying on so much confusing exposition that the film's denouement is all whimper and no bang. Simply put, it's a good story, badly told.

The film opens (in 1955 rather than the novel's 1959; Parker felt that 1959 belonged more in attitude to the '60s) with private eye Harry Angel (Rourke) being summoned to a meeting with a mysterious client by the name of Louis Cyphre (DeNiro). (Hjortsberg doesn't exactly have a light touch when it comes to character names.) Parker has the meeting occur in a black church where the frenzied congregation is urged to "Open up your hearts, open up your wallets" by an obviously suspect minister; Hjortsberg stages their mutual introduction at (a just as unsubtle)

666 Fifth Avenue, over a civilized lunch.

Mr. Cyphre—in the novel described as "anywhere between 45 and 60... tanned and elegant... with cruel, tapered fingers"—engages Angel to track down a crooner named Johnny Favorite, whose career was in full bloom when he was suddenly drafted and shipped off to war. Cyphre was never his agent, but he was able to use his "considerable influence" in his behalf. Their contract included certain collateral that was to be forfeited in the event of his death; but Cyphre was unable to cash in because Favorite (real name: Jonathan Liebling) was shipped home "a total vegetable" after a surprise air raid and transferred to a private hospital in upstate New York, where presumably he underwent radical treatments for shell shock (actually acute amnesia).

Cyphre's attorney seemed satisfied that Johnny was cooling out his last days as a zombie until very recently, when they began to suspect that he was no longer a patient at the institution. Had he died? Been sent to another hospital? For \$125 a day, plus expenses, Angel would find out.

Angel's search for Favorite takes him from New York's Lower East Side, to Harlem, to the French Quarter of New Orleans (a location added for the film), where he gets an introduction to voodoo and black magic, courtesy of luscious coffee and cream Epiphany (Lisa Bonet of *THE COSBY SHOW*), whom he later learns is Favorite's daughter. As the clues pile up, so do the dead bodies: among them a morphine-addicted doctor who faked Johnny's hospital discharge (fatally shot through the eye), a blues musician who played in Favorite's band (poor guy choked on his own genitalia) and Johnny's white-witch fiancée, Margaret (her heart was cut out with a sacrificial knife).

Angel, a reasonably assured gumshoe but no major leaguer in the gray matter department, begins to notice that all of his suspects are being bumped off—and shortly after he has interrogated them. ("I'm being set up," he whines, clearly the last to know.) The challenge before him now is to find the missing common denominator to the murders while staying one step ahead of the flatfoots who

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## SF premise in service to an '80s screwball comedy script

### MAKING MR. RIGHT

An Orion Pictures release of a Barry & Enright production. 4/87, 95 mins. In color. Director, Susan Seidelman. Producers, Mike Wise & Joel Tuber. Executive producers, Susan Seidelman & Dan Enright. Director of photography, Edward Lachman. Screenplay, Floyd Byars & Laurie Frank. Editor/associate producer, Andrew Mondshein. Art direction, Jack Blackman. Set decorators, Scott Jacobson & Jimmy Robinson. Special visual effects, Bran Ferren. Costume designers, Rudy Dillon & Adelle Lutz. Music, Chaz Jankel. Casting, Risa Bramon & Billy Hopkins.

Jeff Peters/Ulysses ..... John Malkovich  
Frankie Stone ..... Ann Magnuson  
Trish ..... Glenn Headly  
Steve Marcus ..... Ben Masters  
Sandy ..... Laurie Metcalf  
Estelle Stone ..... Polly Bergen  
Dr. Ramdas ..... Harsh Nayyar

by Thomas Doherty

Susan Seidelman's *MAKING MR. RIGHT* has an android, a pinhead scientist, and a space shot, but the bare bones SF elements are about as essential here as paleontology is to *BRINGING UP BABY*. This is a screwball comedy laced with generous doses of '80s version feminism, a brand which owes a lot more to Eve Arden and Joan Rivers than Betty Friedan and Kate Millet. Its underlying motivation is not the hoary SF conceit of artificial life but the palpable hunger for (decent) male companionship felt by contemporary women caught in a demographic crunch. Eightie's woman Frankie Stone (Ann Magnuson) bounces back and forth between two halves of a split personality—stiff scientist Jeff Peters (John Malkovich) and his android lookalike Ulysses (ditto).

The predictable narrative hook is that Peters is a whole lot more remote, unfeeling, and robotic than his sensitive, guileless, and lovesick creation. Malkovich, looking even weirder in a blond wig than he did strung out in *THE KILLING FIELDS*, has pretty much of a thankless role in his Peters incarnation. One keeps expecting him to loosen up and fall for Frankie, to realize the android is only a projection of his better self, but he never does. The periodic bickering between the aloof scientist and the madcap lady over how best to handle Ulysses plays disconcertingly like real petty bickering—there's none of the sexual sparks that should fly between two romantic leads tossing off

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## Susan Seidelman on directing *MAKING MR. RIGHT*

Director Susan Seidelman hit it big with her second feature film, *DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN* which featured pop singer Madonna. For her followup, Seidelman picked a romantic comedy with science fiction trimmings



Susan Seidelman

about the relationship between Frankie Stone, a high-powered public relations consultant, and an android destined to visit the stars. The script had been sent to Seidelman by her writer friends Floyd Byars and Laurie Frank in 1985. The story's romantic elements appealed to the director.

"I find modern romance very confusing," said Seidelman. "This movie reflects upon the confused relationships between men and women in the eighties, and does it in a satirical way. Although it's a screwball comedy, I wanted to do it within the context of the science fiction genre."

Screen robots and films set in laboratories are nothing new, but Seidelman was looking for a different approach. "We were trying to deal with it in a funky way," she said. "In a way like in the late '50s and early '60s when we used to think of technology as our friend. Technology then was optimistic. These days it's a little more threatening. Because it was a comedy we wanted to hark back to a much more optimistic time period. A little bit like *THE JETSONS* or the New York World's Fair. You know, 'better living through chemistry.' That sort of thing." Seidelman tried to give the labs and technology in the film a '50s retro-look.

The script called for several

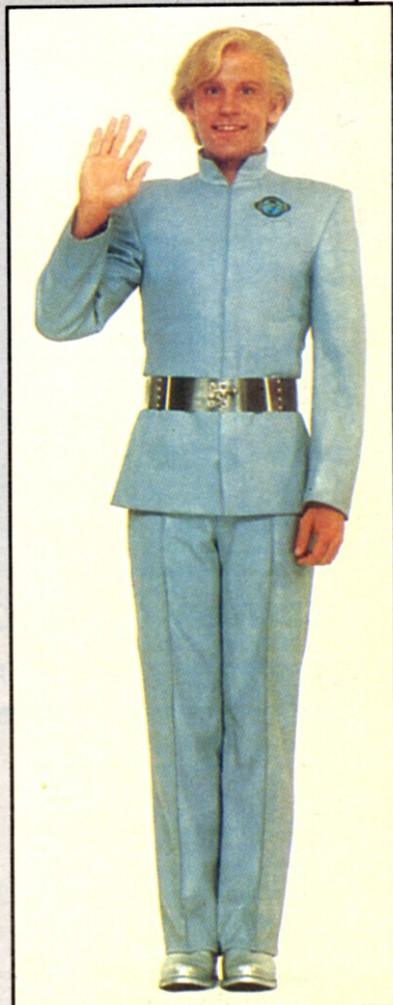
special effects sequences. Seidelman had a little experience working with effects on her film debut, *SMITHEREENS*. In that film one of the characters goes to a movie and a short two-minute film had to be shot to fill out the scene. "It was

one of those really funny schlocky monster movies," she said. "I worked with a really interesting guy named Ed French who made this goofy little monster for the part." For the robot makeups in *MAKING MR. RIGHT*, Seidelman hired Carl Fullerton.

The director had little experience working with optical effects and turned to New York-based expert Bran Ferren who executed a number of complicated shots in which John Malkovich plays the dual role of robot Ulysses and his creator Dr. Jeff Peters. Said Seidelman, "We did moving split screen shots like the scene where Dr. Peters walks down a hallway and he literally passes in front of himself. The camera pans with him playing the other role of Ulysses. We used a computer-controlled camera that probably wasn't even available a year ago."

Seidelman said she depended to a large extent on the input of the effects crew. "It is intimidating at first to work with somebody who understands effects. But it kind of de-mystifies it for you. I'm not intimidated by effects anymore. Although I don't know everything about them, I feel less frightened by them."

Since actor John Malkovich in his dual role of Jeff Peters and robot creation Ulysses had



John Malkovich as android Ulysses.

to play both sides of the frame, Seidelman had to shoot about a quarter of the film twice, resulting in a lengthy twelve week schedule. "There are five or six scenes where he has to play against himself," said Seidelman. "we had to make him up as Dr. Peters, shoot the scene and then he'd have to go into makeup and come back out that afternoon and play Ulysses. That took a lot of time."

Seidelman picked Malkovich because she felt it was important to find an actor who could make Peters and Ulysses two distinct entities. "I think he is such a good character actor," she said. "And in real life he's very funny. Although he hasn't really played a comedy part before in a movie, I had total faith after meeting him that he would be able to play not just one, but two comedic parts."

Dan Scapperotti

Glenn Headly and Ann Magnuson (r) try to help an agitated Ulysses get his head on straight after having sex, a makeup effect by Carl Fullerton.







Vincent Price as the host of *ESCAPES*, a video anthology of fantastic tales.

## Fantasy tales for home video are trite and overly familiar

### ESCAPES

A Visual Perceptions production, distributed by Prism Entertainment (video). 1986, 72 mins. In color. Director, David Steensland. Screenplay, Steensland. Producers, Angela Sanders & Steensland. Director of photography, Gary Tomsic. Editors, Dane Westvik & Kiplan Hall. Creature Design, Robert Freidin. Music, Todd Popple.

Host..... Vincent Price  
Mr. Olson..... John Mitchum  
Matt Wilson..... Todd Fulton  
Delivery driver..... Michael Patton-Hall  
Mary Tucker..... Shirley O'Key

by David Wilt

Vincent Price, having largely abandoned his acting career for a

The spaceship itself turns out to be the alien in "Jonah's Dream," when a UFO crashes into an old codger's farmhouse.



more lucrative and certainly less strenuous life as a "personality" host and commercial pitchman, receives prominent billing as the "star" of this direct-to-video release, but has even less to do than as host of PBS's *MYSTERY* series. Price appears at the beginning and end of the tape, for a total of about five minutes screen time, and has minimal interaction with the stories he is allegedly introducing.

*ESCAPES* is a *NIGHT GALLERY*-type TV show, with six stories of varying length included in an hour-long package. Price is the only name star. John Mitchum, Robert's brother, is the only other recognizable personality in the cast. The plots of the segments are trite and overly familiar.

"Hall of Faces," the framing story, shows Todd Fulton receiving a copy of the *ESCAPES* tape from mailman Price, a pointless segment reminiscent of *SCREAM-TIME*, a British anthology tape with similar American framing footage. Longer segments, which range from 15-20 minutes in length include "A Little Fishy," about a fisherman who falls prey to an unseen angler (this segment is at least mildly cute); "Who's There?," about a portly jogger pursued by a number of mutated, ape-like creatures in reasonably good makeup by Robert Freidin;

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## Home video *ESCAPES* produced in 16mm on a low budget in Sacramento

By V O'Melveny

*ESCAPES* is the project of 28 year-old Sacramento-based producer David Steensland, in preparation for several years before it became a Prism made-for-home-video release. Steensland had planned a series of 75-minute *ESCAPES* cassettes that would feature five to six stories hosted by a different star narrator also involved in the action. Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, and Donald Pleasance were approached as potential hosts. But Steensland has postponed production of Volume II for home video release and is trying to interest domestic television suppliers in a series of 26 30-minute episodes.

"We are going to make the stories weirder as we go along," promised Steensland, who has a framed picture of *TWILIGHT ZONE* creator Rod Serling in his wood-paneled office. Since its release by Prism in June 1986, *ESCAPES* has sold about 9000 units. Steensland estimates sales at about \$750,000 in the world market, mostly domestic.

To get *ESCAPES* rolling, Steensland shot the segment "A Little Fishy" in one day for \$9,000, and used it as a demo to gain funding for the rest of the production. The most ambitious and expensive of the segments is "Jonah's Dream," shot in three days for \$40,000. Owing more to Spielberg than Serling, it's the story of a feisty old codger who aids a hurt, lost alien. "Think Twice" was shot in the streets of Sacramento in two days for \$20,000.

*ESCAPES* makes use of a new film-to-video technique, developed by local cinematographer Gary Tomsic, which is being considered to provide an international standard for satellite video communications and high definition television. The technique involves shooting film at 30 frames per second instead of the customary 24 fps, for easier and better quality transfer to video tape. By matching film to conventional video recording and playback speeds, Tomsic makes possible a 1:1 ratio transfer that gives 16mm a clarity and quality of video picture comparable to 35mm

but at a significantly lower cost.

Steensland sees the direct-to-home video market as a great opportunity for independent filmmakers, but deplores the kind of graphic, exploitative product that is being cranked out. He originally negotiated with Video Communications, Inc. to hit the direct-to-home video market first with *ESCAPES*, but when the project fell through, VCI made a slasher film called *BLOOD CULT* instead [16:22]. Steensland was dismayed and surprised by VCI's action, since they had discussed the desire to do quality product. Steensland calls *BLOOD CULT*, "an exploitative piece of crap, the sort of stuff which I am totally against because I



Producer/director David Steensland

believe that if that stuff gets a real foothold in the door of the home video market, we are going to see a flood of the stuff, the woman murdered on screen, with sex scenes and a lot of foul language."

Steensland developed his filmmaking philosophy of "do it in your hometown" at Robert Redford's Sundance Institute film festivals in Utah and at Tahoe Film and Video workshops near his own hometown which hosts students from around the world. He found ready collaborators in Bill Boes and Loren Gitthens, who run Sacramento's Mutant Labs, the makers of the 11 X 8 X 3-foot alien spaceship seen in "Jonah's Dream."

Steensland's co-producer, Angela Sanders, from Britain, was a contact made at the Sacramento film festival. Together they raised the modest \$175,000 *ESCAPES* budget entirely from local investors. □



## From Bulgaria to ILM, a forum for the world's best animation

### ANIMATION CELEBRATION

An Expanded Entertainment release of an International Tournee of Animation production. Executive producers, Gary Meyer, Steve Gilula, & Terry Thoren. Producer, Terry Thoren. In color and 35mm. 88 mins.

SUNBEAM, Paul Vester (UK); EVERY DOG'S GUIDE TO COMPLETE HOME SAFETY, Les Drew (Natl. Film Board of Canada); CUCKOO, Velislav Kasakov (Bulgaria); ITS AN O.K. LIFE, George Griffin (U.S.A.); DINO ALLEY, Chiodo Bros (U.S.A.); QUEST: A LONG RAYS JOURNEY INTO LIGHT, Michael Scullin (Apollo Computer, U.S.A.); RICHARD WILLIAMS COMMERCIALS, Richard Williams (UK); THE WRECK OF THE JULIE PLANTE, Stephen Weston (Taylor Grant, UK); QUASIS CABARET TRAILER, Sally Crikshank (U.S.A.); AUGUSTA MAKES HERSELF BEAUTIFUL, Csaba Varga (Hungary); CHROMOSAURUS, Pacific Data Images (U.S.A.); BROKEN DOWN FILM, Osamu Tezuka (Japan); COMEBACK TO SORRENTO, Donio Doney (Bulgaria); CAT AND MOUSE, Kirk Henderson (Colossal Pics., U.S.A.); THE CHICKEN, Sotir Gelev (Bulgaria); SECOND CLASS MAIL, Alison Snowden (UK); TUBERS TWO STEP, Chris Wedge (U.S.A.); OH WHAT A KNIGHT, Paul Driessen (Netherlands); TRAVELING LIGHT, Jane Aaron (U.S.A.); THE ADVENTURES OF ANDRE AND WALLY B., John Lasseter (U.S.A.); HAPPY HOUR, Brett Koth (U.S.A.); I WAS A THANKSGIVING TURKEY, John Schnall (Direct Cinema, U.S.A.); A COMIC ZOOM, Pacific Data Images (U.S.A.); GET A JOB, Brad Caslor (Natl. Film Board of Canada).

by Thomas Doherty

Though often more difficult, innovative, and entertaining than live-action film, animation is treated like a poor cousin to what is presumptuously called real life cinema. After all, the stuff of cartoons—talking rodents, dancing hippos, and flying squirrels—seems pretty juvenile compared to the august material of adult melodrama—MIAMI VICE, FAME, and AIR WOLF. As in Hollywood's golden days, when a Warner Bros cartoon served as warm-up to the featured attraction, animation is typically relegated to subordinate status. A nice garnish, but seldom the main course.

Lately, though, animation has undergone a sharp revitalization and, increasingly, the work is being accorded a new attention and regard. The flurry of activity is evident not only in Spielberg's dismal Disney retread, AN AMERICAN TAIL, but in such varied enterprises as comic books aimed at college-age demographics (*The Nam*), biographies for the intelligentsia (Art Spiegelman's brilliant memoir of life with a Holocaust father, *Maus*), commercial advertising (Will Vinton's Claymation for California Raisins), and, most visibly, in a wave of music videos whose blend of live-action, stop-action, computer graphics, animation, and god knows what all have created the most joyous precision choreography of image and sound since Max Fleischer teamed up with Cab Calloway for MINNIE THE MOOCH-

ER (the video clips for Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer" and "Big Time" and A-ha's "Take On Me" being exemplary).

By and large, however, animation lacks ready outlets of display and distribution—not to mention financing. One is thankful, then, that each year the International Tournee of Animation collects the best animation from around the world in a convenient package. The current package—the 19th nervous shakedown—was so successful that the group put together another compilation called simply ANIMATION CELEBRATION. Backed with a nice publicity push, the festival is geared to repertory theatre or university film program exhibition.

The celebration features some twenty-two discrete pieces of animation packed neatly into ninety minutes. Contributions run the gamut from Bulgaria to ILM, from traditionally styled talking animals to experimental super-tech to surrealistic free-associating. Given that kind of range, it's difficult to characterize the collection as a whole, except to say that each animator seems to have fulfilled Max Fleischer's dictum: "If it can happen in real life, it's not animation." Of course, twenty-two pieces per feature run the risk of input overload, but on the



At 30 seconds "Chromosaurus" by Pacific Data barely has time to strut his stuff.

other hand, the occasional stinker passes quickly enough not to permeate the entire show.

As usual, the Tournee seems weighted slightly in favor of the National Film Board of Canada, perhaps understandably so since this is one of the few places outside of Anaheim where animation is taken seriously. The NFB's two entries, Les Drew's (great name) "Every Dog's Guide to Complete Home Safety" and Brad Caslor's "Get a Job," are each over ten

minutes in length, nearly twice as long as any of the other entries. Probably to justify funding, each has to do double duty as creative art and public service announcement. Drew's short is a loony-toon dog's-eye-view of his criminally reckless owners and Caslor's is a tongue-in (again, dog's)-cheek view of the travails of a job search, one that gleefully undercuts its own career opportunities.

The Japanese contribute "Brok-continued on page 58

### Lucasfilm short a brief flirtation with computer animation

Certainly the most costly, but far from the most impressive segment of the ANIMATION CELEBRATION, is THE ADVENTURES OF ANDRE AND WALLY B., a computer animated short produced by Pixar when they were still a division of Lucasfilm.

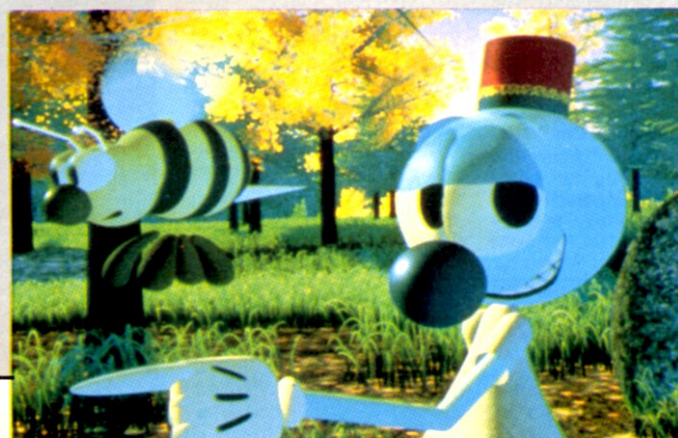
The 1 minute 49 second short, which features Andre the android cavorting in a forest with pal Wally the bee, was first shown at the International Animation Festival in Toronto in 1984, where it received a special award. The short's fully three dimensional character anima-

tion was designed in the classic style by Disney-trained artist John Lasseter.

The short represented advancements in computer graphics devised by Alvy Ray Smith and Ed Catmull, including articulated motion blurring of the characters for enhanced realism. The short's complex 3-D background sets were fully computer generated using particle systems. Frequent Lucas contributor Ben Burtt provided sound design through Lucasfilm's Sprocket Systems.

Developed as a blue sky diversion with the profits from STAR WARS, Lucas divested himself of Pixar during a cash crunch in 1986. The company was purchased in a multi-million dollar deal by computer whiz Steven P. Jobs, with Smith and Catmull remaining in charge. □

Lucasfilm's animated short THE ADVENTURES OF ANDRE AND WALLY B.





# FILM RATINGS

## THE BARBARIANS

Directed by Ruggero Deodato. Cannon Group, 5/87, 88 mins. With: David Paul, Peter Paul, Richard Lynch, Eva LaRue.

The Barbarian Brothers, aka David and Peter Paul, identical twin bodybuilders who got their first movie exposure in D.C. CAB and THE FLAMINGO KID, are back with a campy sword-and-sorcery epic that ridicules the genre's heavyhandedness. This epic abounds with double entendres and out-of-place Valley Girl talk. Director Ruggero Deodato, (THE LAST CANNIBAL WORLD, CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST) and screenwriter James R. Silke throw in everything but the kitchen sink and still have trouble sustaining interest. Deodato, who has often worked as a technician with neo-realism kingpin Roberto Rossellini, keeps the characters one-dimensional. Intriguing Italian locations and extravagant costumes and sets enhance the production but fail to enliven a doomed concept.

• Paul Gordon

## THE BELIEVERS

Directed by John Schlesinger. Orion, 5/87, 114 mins. With: Martin Sheen, Helen Shaver, Robert Loggia, Jimmy Smits.

The real horror film is back, rescued from the depths by John Schlesinger. The mystic rites of Santeria, a pagan religion disguised as Christianity, are the catalysts for this fine suspense thriller. Martin Sheen is excellent as a man plunged into the nightmare world of the supernatural, fighting for the

Santeria voodoo rituals in New York in THE BELIEVERS.



Barbarian Brothers David & Peter Paul in THE BARBARIANS.

life of his son against a powerful, mysterious cult that practices human sacrifice. Schlesinger makes you feel for each of his characters. Instead of awaiting the next killing, you prey it will be averted. An intriguing film from a master storyteller.

••• DS

## CREEPSHOW II

Directed by Michael Gornick. New World, 5/87, 88 mins. With: Dorothy Lamour, George Kennedy, Page Hannah.

A major dud, sure to embarrass almost everyone connected with it. Viewers who don't fall asleep during the "Old Chief Wood'n Head" segment are treated to the sight of what appears to be a plastic tablecloth menacing four unlikeable teenagers in "The Raft." The final tale, "The Hitchhiker," is the best of a bad lot, but becomes tiresome due to repetition. Prominently billed Tom Savini is unrecognizable under makeup in two brief sequences in which his voice is dubbed by Joe Silver. The makeups by Howard Berger and Ed French are likely to disappoint fans of the original.

• JPH

George Romero's screenplay is taut with suspense, and each of the episodes is ghoulish fun. But the script also displays a distinct lack of originality. The Stephen King stories are predictable and two of the three tales depend on an overworked revenge motif. But that's not far from the mark of the EC comic books so fondly remembered as the inspiration for all of this. You may know where you're going but it's still fun getting there.

•• DS

## DOLLS

Directed by Stuart Gordon. Empire Pictures, 4/87, 77 mins. With: Ian Patrick Williams, Carolyn Purdy-Gordon, Carrie Lorraine, Guy Rolfe.

During the infamous dark

and stormy night, an assemblage of disposable B-movie types find shelter in the home of an eccentric toy maker and his wife. Those who don't adhere to the toy maker's philosophy of "surrendering to the good will toys provide" face an untimely demise—in the form of murderous dolls that dispatch their victims using everything from screwdrivers to hacksaws.

This Italian-American Empire production, slovenly directed by the usually capable Stuart Gordon is a complete botch; stupidly plotted, moralistic (we're even treated to a lecture on the responsibilities of parenthood by the toy maker—this after his cuddly creations have hacked up four people!), and unbelievably sadistic. Even the dolls—a combination of puppetry, mechanics, and stop-motion—failed to impress. Give me the original TWILIGHT ZONE's "Talking Tina" episode anyway.

• Kyle Counts

## EAT AND RUN

Directed by Christopher Hart. New World, 10/86, 85 mins. With: Ron Silver, Sharon Schlarth, R. L. Ryan, John F. Fleming.

Imagine a first draft script by Mel Brooks directed by cult favorite Edward D. Wood, Jr. and you'll get an idea of this comedy about a 400 lb. alien devouring Italian-Americans in New York's Little Italy. Though brimming with raw ideas, the film falls short in their execution. Awkward camera set-ups and unpolished performances work against the already unsure material.

Ron Silver plays alien-hunting detective Mickey McSorley, prone to sprouting third-rate Chandleresque prose in conversation. R.L. Ryan plays Murray Creature (like those monsters from Japan's Toho Studio his name is just a

"given" with no explanation), reminiscent of Tor Johnson, the former wrestler who was a frequent low-budget monster for producer-director Edward D. Wood, Jr. Ryan is appropriately huge, but despite the application of piranha-styled dentures lacks the threatening screen presence necessary even for "humor in a jugular vein." (All of Murray's consuming occurs off-camera.) The filmmakers may have been seeking cult status for their undeniably off-beat movie, but unlike Wood's camp staples which are entertaining laugh-getters in their awfulness, this is just disposable fast food.

• Vincent J. Bossone

## EYES OF FIRE

Directed by Avery Crounse. Aquarius Films, 1984, 86 mins. With: Dennis Lipscomb, Guy Boyd, Rebecca Stanley, Sally Klein.

Made in 1983 as CRYING BLUE SKY, and released regionally in 1984 in a 106-minute version, this period ghost story is the work of Missouri filmmaker Avery Crounse. The plot almost defies description. In 1750 a small band of American settlers sets up a community on ground sacred to the Indians, believed to be inhabited by a nature devil. The valley proves to be haunted by the souls of the last settlers who were killed by the demon, which pop up from the ground. In one sequence the ghosts steal a young child, whose faceless body is found hanging from a crucifix while nearby her likeness appears in the branch of a tree.

The spooky and off-beat action leads up to a climactic battle between a young settler (Karlene Crockett) with paranormal powers. Makeup by Annie Maniscalco and crew for the demon is extremely effective. On the negative side,

the plot takes too long to get started and is leisurely paced throughout. Some dialogue is undecipherable, and the acting is not of the highest calibre. But the film is well worth catching, and director Avery Crounse looks like a filmmaker to watch.

•• JPH

## FRANKENSTEIN '88

Directed by Jean Claude Lord. 20th Century-Fox, 1984, 92 mins. With: Richard Cox, Terry Austin, Maury Chaykin, Pam Grier.

This lamentable 1984 Canadian effort, also known as THE VINDICATOR, is about a secret scientific experiment resulting in a part man/part machine, hell bent on murder. Produced by Don Carmody and John Dunning, the film was acquired but never released by Fox, though it has now shown up on Canadian cable-TV. Stan Winston Associates provided the Frankenstein suit worn by David McIlwraith. It's nothing the extremely talented Winston should mention on his resume, a cross between the suit in SWAMP THING and Arnold Schwarzenegger's final metamorphosis in THE TERMINATOR.

Screenwriters Edith Rey and David Preston owe more of their story to The Incredible Hulk comic book than to Mary Shelley. Their Frankenstein combines the Hulk's uncontrollable violent tendencies with the gentleness of scientist Bruce Banner, the Hulk's alter-ego, all in the same body. We're supposed to sympathize with the monster's anguish over his newly found murderous impulses but it doesn't quite come off.

• Gary Kimber

## THE GATE

Directed by Tibor Takacs. New Century/Vista, 5/87, 85 mins. With: Stephen Dorff, Louis Tripp, Christa Denton.

A familiar, threadbare tale

William Stout's design for the MONSTER IN THE CLOSET.





# FILM RATINGS

of a house and two children slowly being taken over by evil forces, saved by some interesting special effects work by Randall Cook and Craig Reardon. Directed by little-known Canadian, Tibor Takacs with an eye toward a slow, steady development until the special effects action starts coming fast and furious.

Supervised by Cook, the effects include Reardon's zombie-like Workman, strongly reminiscent of Peter Cushing in *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* (1972). Cook's stop-motion Demon Lord is technically terrific, with 4 eyes, 4 arms, and snout-like face, but exudes no real menace. Like the giant beasts of Ray Harryhausen it just sits there, flapping its tentacles and winking its eyes.

More interesting are Cook's and Reardon's imp-like "minions." Comical at times, violently malicious at others, they seem possessed with more *joie de vivre* than their boss. One scene stands out memorably from the rest. When the Demon Lord first appears his slew of nasty, mischievous devil's helpers leap and cavort with gay abandon. Aaahh, the sheer thrill of it, "he's finally here" they seem to be saying.

• Patrick Hobby

## GOthic

Directed by Ken Russell. Vestron Pictures, 5/87, 90 mins. With: Gabriel Byrne, Julian Sands, Natasha Richardson.

Ken Russell's freakish supposition about what happened at Lord Byron's Italian castle in 1816—the stormy night when Mary Shelley conjured up *FRANKENSTEIN*. Personally, I'll take James Whale's subdued, laconic treatment of the event depicted at the beginning of *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

Although Russell's hallucinatory images seldom bore, many play like leftovers from *TOMMY*'s acid queen sequence. This wildly uneven onslaught may escape even the most dedicated Russell fans. The elaborate production values and head-trip effects sustain interest for a few minutes. However, sitting through this excessive ordeal for the shocking "breasts with eyes" is not worth the time or the eye strain.

• LPR

## HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS

Directed by William Dear. Universal, 6/87, 110 mins. With: John Lithgow, Melinda Dillon, Don Ameche.

E.T. for the umpteenth time. But this tale of a lost and lovable bigfoot doesn't stumble over its prepackaged storyline, its surface gloss character development, or its failure to fully realize a "Let the Animals

	●●●●	●●●	●●	●	○			
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	POOR			
FILM TITLE	VJB	FSC	DG	JPH	BK	LPR	DS	
ALLAN QUATERMAIN...GOLD Gary Nelson Cannon, 2/87, 99 mins.	●				○	○	●	
ANGEL HEART Alan Parker Tri-Star, 3/87, 113 mins.	●●	●	●●●	●	●●	●●	●●	
THE BELIEVERS John Schlesinger Orion, 6/87, 114 mins.	●●	●●●	●	●	●●	●●	●●●	
CREEPSHOW 2 Michael Gornick New World, 5/87, 89 mins.	●	●●	●	●	○	○	●●	
DEAD TIME STORIES Jeffrey Delman Bedford Ent., 1/87, 81 mins.	○		○	○	○	○		
EVIL DEAD 2 Sam Raimi Rosebud Releasing, 3/87, 85 mins.	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●	●●	●●	●●	
FROM BEYOND Stuart Gordon Empire, 11/86, 85 mins.	●●●	●●	●●	●	●	●	●●	
THE GATE Tibor Takacs New Century, 5/87, 92 mins.	●	●	●	●●	●●	●	●	
THE GOLDEN CHILD Michael Ritchie Paramount, 12/86, 93 mins.	●●	●	●	●●●	●	●	●	
GOthic Ken Russell Vestron, 5/87, 90 mins.	●●		●	○	●	●	●	
HARRY & THE HENDERSONS William Dear, Univ., 5/87, 91 mins.	●●	●●	●●●	●●	●	●	●●	
THE KINDRED Jeffrey Obrow F/M Ent., 1/87, 91 mins.	●●	●		●●	●	●	●	
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS Frank Oz Warner Bros., 12/86, 88 mins.	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●	●●	●●●	
MAKING MR. RIGHT Susan Seidelman Orion, 3/87, 95 mins.	●●	●	●	●	●	●	●●	
MANNEQUIN Michael Gottlieb Fox, 2/87, 89 mins.		○	○	●	●	○		
MAX HEADROOM Philip DeGuere ABC-TV, 4/87, 60 mins.	●●			○	●●●		●	
MONSTER IN THE CLOSET Bob Dahlin, Troma, 1/87, 87 mins.	●	○	○	●●	●		●	
MY DEMON LOVER Charles Loventhal New Line, 5/87, 86 mins.	●	○	○	●	●	○	●●	
NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3 Chuck Russell, New Line, 2/87, 97 mins.	●●	●●	○	●●	●●	●	●●●	
PREDATOR John McTiernan Fox, 6/87, 106 mins.	●●	●	●	●	●	●	●●	
PROJECT X Jonathan Kaplan Fox, 4/87, 108 mins.		●●	●●	●●	●		●	
RETURN TO HORROR HIGH Bill Froelich, New World, 1/87, 95 mins.	○			○	●		●	
STAR TREK IV Leonard Nimoy Paramount, 11/86, 119 mins.	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	
THE STEPFATHER Joseph Ruben New Century Vista, 2/87, 98 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●	●●●	●●●		
WITCHBOARD Kevin S. Tenney Cinema Group, 1/87, 98 mins.	○	●●	●	●	●	●●		
THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK George Miller, Warner Bros., 6/87, 118 mins.	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●●	●●	

VJB/Vincent J. Bossone FSC/Frederick S. Clarke DG/Dann Gire JPH/Judith P. Harris  
BK/Bill Kelley AM/Allen Malmquist LPR/Les Paul Robley DS/Dan Scapperotti

Live" theme. Instead director William Dear clears a path through beautiful scenery, GREYSTOKE-era makeup effects, with superb directing, timing, editing, and a sense of humor which, if far from ingenious, is still consistently clever and well-staged. An enjoyable siting.

•• AM

## INNERSPACE

Directed by Joe Dante. Warner Bros., 7/87, 118 mins. With: Dennis Quaid, Martin Short, Meg Ryan, Kevin McCarthy.

This film is to FANTASTIC VOYAGE what THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN was to THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN. It's a hip, modern update that tries

to replace the sense of wonder of the somewhat flawed original with weak humor, killing what awe and grandeur the story could have possessed. Made for Steven Spielberg's Amblin company, the film resembles nothing more than a \$25 million episode of AMAZING STORIES. Director Joe Dante seems more adept at the quick bit than the sustained character humor the film needs.

• Dennis Fischer

## MAN FACING SOUTHEAST

Directed by Eliseo Subiela. U.S. Film Dallas (Argentina), 3/87, 105 mins. With: Lorenzo Quinteros, Hugo Soto, Ines Vernengo.

Eliseo Subiela's often mysti-

cal film, an Argentine MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH, is about a mental hospital patient who insists he's an ET. The patient, Rantes, possesses a high IQ, has no past, and wants not to be "cured," only "understood." The sympathetic doctor treating him breaks that ethical barrier of maintaining a degree of distance between himself and his patient.

A brilliant film that raises all kinds of questions, perhaps some too blatantly, about the nature of faith, science, and religion. Rantes is compared to the second coming of Christ, while the doctor becomes a modern day Pontius Pilate, leaving the final solution up to

the hospital director as he effectively "washes his hands" of affairs. Hugo Soto as the visitor possesses remarkable spirituality as he stands facing southeast in a courtyard, waiting for some form of instruction from beyond.

## MAX HEADROOM

Directed by Farhad Mann. ABC-TV, 3/87, 60 mins. With: Matt Frewer, Amanda Pays, George Coe, Jeffrey Tambour.

Though hailed prior to its opening by such bastions of public taste as *People Magazine* as a breakthrough in adult television, the pilot for this new futuristic ABC series offered little evidence to support this. The plot revolved around blipverts—30 second commercials compressed into 3 seconds—which cause sedentary couch potato viewers to explode—a device SCTV made passe long ago. Passed over in the exposition was the more interesting notion of 2-way TV—while you're watching, it's also watching (and recording) you.

The show seemed padded at an hour to delay the initial appearance of Max Headroom, a computer-generated person, with a teeth-grating speech defect, created from the mind print of a boring news photographer played by Matt Frewer. Use of computer graphics was much better integrated in *THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY*, and editing between the subjective camera point-of-view of Frewer and the objective viewpoint of the rest of the show was irritating.

The high point of the opening episode was actually a commercial featuring Max Headroom for Coke. Aside from the wit of casting Charles Rocket (who was fired from SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE for saying the "F" word) as the ruthless head of Network 23, the pilot had nothing much going for it. The series is on ABC's September schedule.

• JPH

## MONSTER IN THE CLOSET

Directed by Bob Dahlin. Troma Inc., 4/87, 89 mins. With: Donald Grant, Denise DuBarry, Henry Gibson, Howard Duff.

An affectionate parody of '50s monster-on-the-loose pictures that thinks it's funnier than it is. Which is not at all. The film is directed by Chicagoan Bob Dahlin, who won a student Oscar for his Hitchcock parody *NORMAN NURDLEPICK'S "SUSPENSION,"* which was much funnier. Though Dahlin reprises some of the same material, he hasn't progressed much as a filmmaker from his student days. Only the money that built a decent man-in-suit monster



# FILM RATINGS



Oscar-winner Stan Winston's alien design for **PREDATOR**.

(by Doug Beswick), filled supporting roles with capable but down-on-their-luck actors, and closed the Golden Gate Bridge for a few minutes of filming, indicates this film's professional status. The story and lead acting smell of amateurism, and it's all very stilted and trite. The kindest word for the film is "boring." **AM**

Special praise goes to Henry Gibson who keeps a straight face while delivering the terrible lines needed to advance the plot. Though the script strains for comedy and mostly fails, somehow this doesn't detract from one's overall nostalgic enjoyment. Occasionally the gags work, such as the directive to "Destroy all closets!" (where the monster is found to lurk), or use of the classic last line from the 1933 **KING KONG**.

● **JPH**

## MY DEMON LOVER

Directed by Charlie Loventhal. New Line Cinema, 5/87, 86 mins. With: Scott Valentine, Michelle Little, Arnold Johnson, Robert Trebor.

Tawdry satirical farce about a street bum (Valentine) stricken with a Romanian curse who turns into a demon whenever he gets horny. The tenuous plot is held together by the promise of some first-rate makeup effects, but even these lose their appeal early on. Valentine hasn't the knack or charisma to keep his resourceful street character interesting for an entire film. The fact that he changes into so many different creatures doesn't make much sense either. Perhaps a stronger dose of horror à la **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**, instead of the film's skimpy **TEEN WOLF** prem-

ise, might have tipped the scales more in its favor. **LPR**

## PREDATOR

Directed by John McTiernan. 20th Century-Fox, 6/87. With: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Carl Weathers.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Tor Johnson of the '80s, is again miscast as a hero. The villain, a disgusting, carnivorous alien hunting humans in Central America, decimates the members of Schwarzenegger's command unit. This derivative movie (which, if you eliminate its explicit gore could have been made in the 1950's) veers from boredom to lame humor to eye-filling violence. The ending is a long perfunctory fight between Arnold and the slimy title character. The perfect summer movie for a noisy young audience. **BK**

## PROJECT X

Directed by Jonathan Kaplan. 20th Century-Fox, 4/87, 108 mins. With: Matthew Broderick, Helen Hunt, Bill Sadler.

Heart-tugging anti-animal experimentation film, which replays Spock's radiation-death-behind-a-glass-wall scene from **STAR TREK II**, only this time with a chimpanzee. Bring your handkerchiefs.

● ● **JPH**

## THE RETURN OF THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN AND THE BIONIC WOMAN

Directed by Ray Austin. NBC-TV, 5/87, 120 mins. With: Lee Majors, Lindsay Wagner, Tom Schanley, Richard Anderson.

Ten years into a listless retirement aboard a charter fishing boat, Col. Steve Austin reluctantly accepts a call to action from his old pals at the Office of Scientific Information when a reactionary group sabotages several munitions plants in the Southwest. Lee Majors and Lindsay Wagner—once the toast of the television cy-bourgeoisie—reprise the roles that made them famous (Wagner even copped an Emmy in 1977).

An okay first half introduces Austin's 23 year-old son Mi-

chael (Tom Schanley) from a brief college marriage and celebrates the reunion of Jaime and Steve, who both wax nostalgic through frequent soft-focus flashbacks. Alas, Michael gets mangled a la dad in an Air Force jet crash and is rebuilt with new, improved bionic parts. The storyline corrodes steadily from there in this pilot for a potential series that would follow the Michael Austin character.

Director Ray Austin (no relation to Steve) adds little to the original concept other than a self-consciously hip soundtrack—including an embarrassing rendition of the Pointer Sisters' "Automatic" that accompanies Michael's rehabilitation. Playing a smug OSI confederate, and confusing matters somewhat, Majors' real-life son is seemingly along for no other reason than a lesson in bionic histrionics from pop. Lowest point occurs early on when a salivating secretary sizes up Majors and muses aloud: "I wonder what parts are bionic..."

● **Dean Lamanna**

## ROXANNE

Directed by Fred Shepisi. 6/87. With: Steve Martin, Daryl Hannah, Shelley Duvall, Rick Rosovich.

Steve Martin is firechief C. D. Bales—a man saddled with an enormous snoz—in this comedic adaptation of Edmond Rostand's play, "Cyrano De Bergerac." C. D. falls for pretty astronomer Roxanne (Daryl Hannah, playing a *smart* dumb blond this time), but she only has stars in her eyes for Chris, the new stud fireman in town (Rick Rosovich, having fun with his no-neck jock image).

C. D. helps shy Chris woo Roxanne by coaching him on how to be shamelessly romantic; but in true hockey Hollywood fashion, C. D. wins Roxanne over—by a nose. While this curious vanity production is oddly entertaining, it lacks a



Malleitor, a Ouija ghost, chops a victim in **WITCHBOARD**.

central point. Martin once again indulges in some wondrous physical comedy and the film boasts eyepopping British Columbia locations. But director Fred Shepisi does little more than translate Martin's script to the screen. Frank Griffin is credited with the skillful nose job!

● **Kyle Counts**

## SPACEBALLS

Directed by Mel Brooks. MGM, 6/87, 95 mins. With: Mel Brooks, John Candy, Rick Moranis, Bill Pullman, Daphne Zuniga, Dick Van Patten.

Visually flat, unimaginatively staged, this Mel Brooks science fiction parody is ploddingly unfunny. The performances, other than Brooks' as the diminutive sage Yogurt in a nicely designed makeup, never come to life. Talented performers like John Candy and Rick Moranis are shackled by a sophomoric script that gives them little that is funny to do or say. The dull, unfunny recitation of the bare bones plot of **STAR WARS** seems to go on forever.

Bits that work include a surprise cameo by John Hurt, reprising his chestbursting scene from **ALIEN**, and a climactic light-sabre duel in which the swords become blatant phallic symbols. The jabs at film merchandising are also on target, but there's not enough to make this ordeal worth sitting through.

● **FSC**

## THE TROUBLE WITH DICK

Directed by Gary Walkow. Frolis Productions, 3/87 (AFI Fest), 93 mins. With: Tom Villard, Susan Dey, Elaine Giffos, Elizabeth Gorcey.

An amiable young sf writer descends into a nightmarish mental wasteland when he moves into an apartment inhabited by three distracting femmes fatales. The trouble here really isn't with Dick, but with director Walkow's primitive view of the world of science fiction, writers and fans. Much of it may stem from a novice understanding of what makes

people like ourselves tick. A prime, albeit nit-picky example: Dick's 3 favorite authors are Kafka, Shakespeare, and Twain, not Asimov, Heinlein, and Niven.

Inventive scenes from Dick's unfinished novel are integrated cleverly into the plot. A cereal bowl of frosted flakes dissolves into a cracked alien landscape. One world doesn't upstage the other either. Daryl Studebaker's photography for both is crisp and well-balanced—although, its sharpness shows off the special effects and Oliver Thomas' cheesy alien costumes for what they are.

● **LPR**

## WITCHBOARD

Directed by Kevin S. Tenney. Cinema Group, 3/87, 98 mins. With: Todd Allen, Tawny Kitaen, Stephen Nichols, Kathleen Wilhoite.

A Ouija board is misused after a party, becoming the portal for an at first playful, then lethal, spirit. Tension mounts with surprising intensity courtesy of writer/director Kevin Tenney. He's best when he delves into facts about the Ouija's past, or follows the characters as they sleuth around for clues. Unfortunately, a familiar ending yields disappointment.

● ● **LPR**

## THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK

Directed by George Miller. Warner Bros., 7/87, 121 mins. With: Jack Nicholson, Susan Sarandon, Cher, Michelle Pfeiffer.

John Updike's novel of witchcraft has been turned into an intriguing—often funny—film by director George Miller, hampered somewhat by an excessive running time. Cher, Susan Sarandon and Michelle Pfeiffer are a trio of single women stuck in a staid New England town devoid of eligible men. Through latent supernatural powers they unwittingly conjure up the devilish Daryl Van Horne in the person of Jack Nicholson, whose wildly hilarious performance is the centerpiece of Miller's tale.

● ● **DS**

Devilish Jack Nicholson in **THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK**.





## EVIL DEAD

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Part Twos. Raimi and company are not about to let professionalism and taste run a sure-fire High Concept or rein in their gruesome inventiveness. Indeed, *EVIL DEAD 2* delivers so spectacularly on the blood and guts that the filmmakers formed their own company, Rosebud Releasing Corporation, to bypass regular channels of distribution and avoid a certain "X" rating from the MPAA. As it is, the film's advertising warns of "scenes which may be too intense for persons under the age of seventeen." Right.

The plot is some nonsense about calling up evil spirits from a vaguely anthropomorphic Book of the Dead, but as long as the special effects kick in real good, who really cares? Ash (Bruce Campbell) and Henrietta (Lou Hancock) intrude into a remote backwoods cabin at night and soon find their relationship, not to mention major appendages, torn assunder. With perhaps undue speed, Henrietta is possessed by demons and the design crew at Doug Beswick Productions. Now played by directorial sibling Ted Raimi under six hours worth of head and body molds, Henrietta performs a cute ballet in ethereal stop-motion, delicately bouncing her Undead Head up and down her arm.


Poor Ash is thus left to fend for himself, which first means fending off the clinging remains of his decapitated ex. As Ash, Bruce Campbell, the dolt-victim in *THE EVIL DEAD*, is the principal target of evil dead vengeance, and he's even a *better* bad actor here than he was in the original. Campbell's sharply etched features are perfect for his role: he looks for all the world like an EC Comics character made flesh. In that spirit, Raimi keeps Campbell's screen presence fairly one-dimensional in order to prevent anything so disconcerting as audience identification. This guy, after all, is really going to be put through a meat grinder.

As in *THE EVIL DEAD*, the decision to inflict a male protagonist with the worst the nether world can serve up is one of Raimi's more intriguing narrative choices. After watching dozens of Jamie Lee Curtis replicants shriek and run, it's refreshing to watch a guy try to get a grip on himself after chainsawing his girlfriend's head in two—the occasion, incidentally, of a wonderful sight gag. Otherwise, sexually and politically speaking, not much else is going on, certainly nothing like the infamous tree-stump rape in the first outing. The second act

entry of a quartet of fresh victims, including two cuties, offers the promise of either romance or sexism, but (perhaps reacting to feminist outcries) Raimi quickly squelches any purient assaults. Interestingly, when the lithesome Bobby Joe (Kassie Wesley) is strangled and stretched by foliage and vines after the fashion of her predecessor in *THE EVIL DEAD*, her torture is far less offensive and sexually suggestive.

Throughout, Raimi's imagination is up to his budget. *EVIL DEAD 2* is a virtual catalogue of the cinematic techniques available to the contemporary gore-monger, including animation, stop-motion photography, matte and miniature work, sculpting, molds and casting, and mechanical design. The production notes assert that of some 1200 shots in the film, 250 demanded special makeup, most of which was supervised by Mark Shostrom of *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET II*. The technical virtuosity and manic pace of the action is thrilling, but no more so than the film's blithe violation of generic norms. The Gothic potential of the cabin is exploited to the full—walls gushing torrents of blood, creepy crawlers in the morgue of a basement—but the extra-household space is where danger really lurks and Raimi's steadicam-like marauding camera zooms after Ash like a predator. In the film's extraordinary coda, the landscape stretches beyond real space and time and zaps the besieged hero to another time, another place, safe but horrifyingly stranded.

Not least, the film is wildly funny. Comedy may be the last refuge of the failed horror director, but Raimi has a rich repertoire of visual and verbal punchlines. In the standout "Hand Amuck" sequence, evil spirits take possession of the hero's right hand and Ash finds himself in the grip of himself. Campbell does a hilarious bit of business, battering his head with plates and punching himself out. He finally defeats his uppity appendage by chainsawing it off. ("Who's laughing now?!" he gloats.) Campbell declaims his punchlines without a trace of irony, scoring laughs where a knowing, tongue-in-cheek delivery would fall flat. Typically, even in this *tour de force* sequence, Raimi ups the ante—detached from the body, the hand is still animate, running around the cabin like a Senoi Wench on speed, scurrying through mouse holes and flipping off its former owner for good measure. That's the kind of playful spirit gore-hounds expect from a severed limb. □



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## MONSTER SQUAD

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any respectable vampire turn over in his grave. Recalled Dekker, "There was one un-named Universal executive who didn't like the script, or didn't think it was what the studio wanted to do. Otherwise, I think they would have made it because they have since seen it and been very supportive." Supportive to the point where Universal is now handling the film's overseas distribution.

Despite the usual warnings about working with child actors, Dekker insisted his cast was wonderful. They had no preconceived walls which adult actors sometimes erect in a director's path, he said. The characters portrayed are all normal kids—but just a little screwy—as Dekker was as a child, spending hours indoors watching old Universal horror movies on television, or listening to "9th Street Bridge" on the family phonograph.

Dekker described a scene in which the Mummy comes and visits Eugene, the club's youngest member, in his bedroom closet. He cries to his father and dad says: "No more monster books for you, young man. You can't read *CFQ* anymore."

The plot device which gathers all the monsters together borrows

the concept of *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* (1948), making Dracula the real heavy. "One hundred years ago, Professor Van Helsing, arch-nemesis of Count Dracula, discovered an ancient amulet which could control the balance between good and evil," said Dekker, describing the plot hook. "Dracula possessed the valuable icon back in 1888. But, Van Helsing's descendants stole the amulet and brought it to America to a small town in the South. Now every 100 years, what goes around, comes around. The balance of good and evil becomes vulnerable and the amulet is the key to controlling the scales. Dracula has come seeking the amulet to tip the scales towards evil so his children of the night can rule forever. The kids have 48 hours to stop him."

Although *THE MONSTER SQUAD* is a comedy to a certain degree, Dekker takes his myths and his monsters very seriously. "I firmly believe in counterpoint and contrast," he said. "Steven Spielberg is my idol and what I've learned from him is that, if you're going to scare people, it's much scarier to have a joke on both sides of the scare. And if you're going to make people laugh, it's much funnier if you have something serious on both sides of the joke." □



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Seated in his airborne battlestation, Skeletor (Frank Langella) hunts down He-Man and the Eternians who have fled to California in **MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE**.

## MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

continued from page 41

budget. Field, a dancer, spent a month in workouts for her role, learning how to sword fight with a fencing instructor using a special double-edged sword. "However, when we got to the point where I was supposed to swordfight, there wasn't enough time," she said. "There were more important things to shoot and I didn't get to do any swordfighting. I was disappointed in that, but it was great training, anyway."

Despite the difficulties of working in the genre, both Pressman and Goddard have future fantasy and science fiction projects on the boards. Goddard is working on a television series called **CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE**, based on toys marketed by Mattel. The show will be the first to have interactive elements that allow participation in the action by viewers. Using a mix of computer animation and live-action, kids at home can fire interactive weapons at robots on the screen. Each gun is allotted five power points; if you hit a robot you gain additional points and if you're not fast enough, and they "hit" you, points are taken away from your gun.

Pressman is working on a New York stage version of **PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE** with Brian DePalma, based on the film Pressman produced in 1974. He also has the film rights to *Judge Dredd*, a hard-hitting new wave science fiction comic book character set in the future. And Pressman looks forward to making more horror films. "To me, horror films are a joyous expression of the cinema," he said. "From **CALIGARI** to Hitchcock, great films have been made in horror. What attracts me to a project is an individual who's looking to stretch the form, and delighting in the medium in the process of doing so." □

## MAKING MR. RIGHT

continued from page 47

nasty remarks. Ulysses, meanwhile, is a maleable puppy dog of a guy. Eventually, Frankie melts before his lovelorn advances and she embraces her living doll—even dressing him at one point. This is what women want?

For the cinematically inclined, the main interest in this kind of dual role endeavor, as in *Evil Twin* scenarios, is noting the diversionary tactics, camera angles, and back and blue screen projection techniques that match up the single actor playing two roles in the same frame. The filmic double dealing is all done pretty well, especially when Malkovich-as-Peters screws on Malkovich-as-Ulysses' head. Doubtless Seidelman's best special effect is Malkovich himself, who relies on small gestures and vocal patterns to differentiate between the identical twins. In fact, the two characters are so fundamentally at odds in cadence and sensibility that when Ulysses shows up dressed like his alter-ego Peters in the climactic reunion scene, neither Frankie nor the audience is fooled for a minute. The real scientific automaton is blasted into space while his human replicant gets the girl—or rather, the girl gets the better half of the guy. It's all reminiscent of **PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO**. "I've met the perfect man," said Mia Farrow in Woody Allen's version, "Of course, he's fictional..."

Though in places clever, discerning, and yes, charming, **MAKING MR. RIGHT** sank like a brick at the boxoffice. Malkovich, blond hair or not, is apparently no one's idea of a Mr. Right. For her part, however, Magnuson, a highly regarded performance artist in her first starring role (she had a memorable bit part as David Bowie's first victim in the atrociously lit vampire flick, **THE HUNGER**), is effortlessly, deliciously sexy, notably in the tight-



fitting dress she wears throughout much of the film's first half. Both man-hungry and independent, Magnuson's Frankie is a vivid portrait of one kind of '80s woman—well-groomed and confident, yet poised uncertainly between new age and old-fashioned female identity.

Fresh off the surprise hit *DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN*, director Seidelman seems less sure-footed in this like-styled follow-up. A genuine oddball item, the film is either a botched experiment or an original hybrid. Perhaps, like its double entendre title, it can have it both ways—at the least, this witty, screwball SF comedy seems a sure bet for videotape reevaluation. □

## FRANK OZ

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Instead he opted to edit much of the movie in his head as he filmed. "This was a highly designed movie as far as shots go," he said. But surprisingly the director didn't use extensive storyboarding for the production. "The only storyboards that were really used were for the plant, which was meticulously storyboarded. But not much else."

"Lyle Conway and I are real proud of the plant because there is no animation," continued Oz. "There's no blue screen, there's no opticals. Everything you see the plant do it does on the floor. I would have liked the plant to move around the room some more, but everytime we wanted it to move it took three days. It was a very complicated thing to do."

Although *Audrey II*, the evil man-eating plant from outer space, was the film's major technical problem, as director, Oz was faced with an even bigger challenge. "I had to overcome the problem of tone in the film," he said. "The problem of making it funny, but not camp because then you wouldn't care about the characters. It's a fine line to make the

audience care about the characters but have a good time. If you have too good a time then it's just a big joke and nobody cares. If you care too much then it's not funny. The tone was the biggest challenge for me."

But the director is proud of his Academy Award-nominated effects crews despite their loss to the *ALIENS* team. Oz regrets that Richard Conway's elaborate miniature effects, costing \$5 million, had to be cut when a happy ending was tagged onto the film. "The work by Richard Conway was the best model work I've seen," said Oz. "It just killed me to tell him it wasn't going to be in the film. He's a wonderful and very gifted person."

Oz agonized over the decision to drop the plant's destruction of New York, but feels justified based on the reaction of preview audiences. "The first preview we had in San Jose had the audience roaring and applauding and loving every minute of the movie until the characters died," he said. "When Seymour and Audrey died the audience was totally silent. They were waiting for something to happen and when it didn't they were very angry at us. I didn't need the preview cards to tell me that, because I was sitting there. As a member of the audience I felt cheated."

"It's not like the stage show," Oz continued. "The stage play ending wasn't transferable as far as I'm concerned. I've thought a great deal about it. On the stage you know it's a felt puppet. You know they're going to come back for a curtain call. It's just funning around. With film its very powerful and you really believe they're dead. We couldn't do that. If I had turned around and made it very funny and campy then the problem of their deaths would be like saying 'Hey. Its okay. Don't take it seriously.' Then I would have betrayed the people that really cared for the characters."

The original hook that drew Oz



Audrey II crashes through New York City in the miniature effects finale of *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, abandoned by director Frank Oz after negative previews.

to the production, the black trio of singers fashioned after girl rock groups of the early sixties, failed to match his initial vision. "There were things that I had wanted to do, but they were only in my head and I realized I couldn't do them," he said. "I always saw the three girls highlighted by a special light that only lit them. An aura about them. But there is no way to do that because they move around the set too much. An optical effect in post-production would look terrible, although the film's opticals expert Bran Ferren would hate me for saying that. I couldn't light them on the set because the light would leak onto the other characters. I wanted them to stand out more."

Early in production Oz slashed the sequence where the plant's buds open revealing the faces of its victims. He felt it would have been a special effect that was too gruesome for the mood of the picture. "My job on this particular movie was not to make a desperately serious statement, although the Faustian legend was always underneath," he said. "It would have been very difficult to make those faces leering out of the plant funny."

The popular closing song in the stage version, "Don't Feed The Plants," had to be dropped from the release print, although it remains on the soundtrack album. "There was no place to put that song if they didn't die, so its gone," said Oz.

"I got a terrible letter about how I betrayed the play," he continued. "Its funny how people are so self righteous without having seen the preview version. If I hadn't shot the original ending then I might have agreed that I should have tried it. But I shot the goddamn thing! I tried it! But the audience is a very dynamic part of a movie. You don't make a movie for yourself, you make it for the audience."

The question of a sequel has

been raised, but Oz is emphatic in proclaiming that he won't be the director. "I'm not interested in sequels," he said. "The only sequel that worked for me was *THE GODFATHER II*. I certainly don't want to do the plant again. It was too difficult."

Oz credits mentor and Muppet tycoon Jim Henson with much of his directorial career. "I couldn't have done the plant if I hadn't learned from Henson all those years," he said. "He was really the one who gave me the opportunity to direct. He asked me to co-direct *THE DARK CRYSTAL* and then to write and direct *THE MUPPETS TAKE MANHATTAN*." Then with a smile Oz added, "I owe a great deal to Henson, hopefully not the money."

Oz wasn't satisfied with the film's early opticals and brought Bran Ferren aboard to complete the job during the last month of production. Although there were not a lot of opticals, the few were important. These included the lightning bolt that preceded Seymour discovering the plant at the oriental florist's shop and the electrifying finale demanded by the change in the ending.

On the whole Oz is content with the final cut, but one shot does disturb him and he cringes every time he sees it. As Audrey finishes her "Somewhere That's Green" number the camera pulls away from Ellen Greene in the window and pans across the street up to the chorus on the roof. He had to use two cranes one on top of the other and, according to Oz, the shot is very shaky.

The director confesses that he doesn't want to make any more kiddie or fantasy films. He would like to tackle a straight film as a director. Work in the fantasy genre will continue through his association with Jim Henson and Oz wants to move in other directions on his non-Muppet projects. □

Oz tightened the film after the previews, dropping several scenes, including a sequence where Seymour (Rick Moranis) is troubled by his new found success.

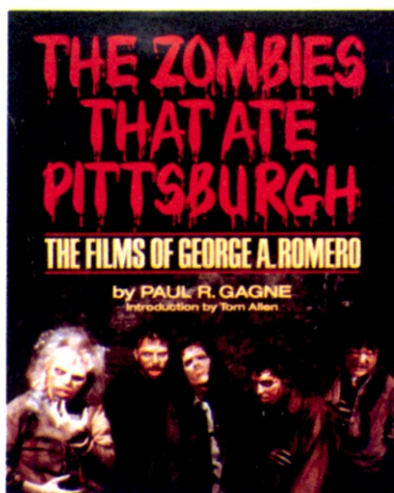




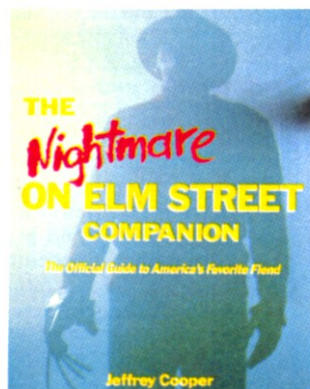
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## ANGEL HEART

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are breathing down his neck. Does he back out of the case? Not our boy. Cyphre merely dangles a \$5,000 check before Angel's peepers and he's back on the trail, his boiled potato nose to the ground, sniffing for new leads.

It doesn't take a *magna cum laude* to figure that Lou Cyphre is a fancy way to pronounce Lucifer, and that Hjortsberg is doing a pulp variation on a Faustian murder mystery. Such as it is, ANGEL HEART works better as a book than a film, since Parker does little more than translate the essence of Hjortsberg's plot machinations to the screen, failing to add any emotional subtext to the characters. (One sorely misses Angel's smirking, hard-boiled narration.) And since no attempt is made to parallel the murders, the audience remains essentially indifferent to the mystery itself—sheer death for a whodunit.

It turns out that Favorite, anxious to dissolve his "soul-for-stardom" pact with the Prince of Darkness, met a soldier in Times Square on New Year's Eve, 1943, and murdered him as part of a transmutation (psychic identity switch) rite. The soldier's name: Angel, Harold R. Yes, Angel turns out to be Favorite, with a reconstructed face, but don't ask me to explain any more than that; I've asked three friends to untangle the film's flurry of last-minute revelations, and none of their interpretations has been the same.

Since Parker so confusingly dispenses essential plot details, the only element of interest left for the viewer is his often stunning, often overblown, imagery—the most talked-about of which shows Bonet and Rourke writhing in the sheets as a torrent of blood pours down from the ceiling. (Parker trimmed ten seconds of Rourke's blood-stained buttocks in order to change the film's original X rating to an R. All the hoopla didn't help the film's boxoffice any, but no doubt the X-rated version will be a hot commodity on the video market.) There are also plenty of shots of squeaky fans, menacing elevators and artfully shadowed halls and alleyways for first year film students to revel in. But, as it's been said before, pretty pictures do not a movie make. Just ask Jean-Jacques Beineix.

While Rourke is certainly a better casting choice for Angel than, say, Dustin Hoffman or Robert Redford (both of whom were associated with the project at various points), his performance rests too heavily on his enigmatic persona. We've seen it all before, most recently in YEAR OF THE

DRAGON: the rumpled clothes and two-day stubble, the impish grin and trademark mumble that mask a quivering vulnerability. But Rourke never quite breaks through his restraints: when he looks into a shattered mirror, his face puffy from tears, we can only guess as to what he's thinking. Is he beginning to realize that *he* is Johnny Favorite? Is he, for the first time, ready to assume responsibility for the trail of carnage left behind him? Or is he just plain scared out of his wits?

Among the supporting cast, Bonet looks sexy in her clinging cottons, Charlotte Rampling barely registers as Margaret and DeNiro embroiders his cameo with an insolent touch of hamminess that is simultaneously fascinating and irritating. As for the much-anticipated chemistry between DeNiro and Rourke, there is something woefully lacking in their scenes together, as if their agents are just out of frame, protecting their clients from being upstaged by one another.

Photography aside, ANGEL HEART has all the trappings and none of the strengths of Parker's best work—BIRDY, SHOOT THE MOON, and FAME. "I was able to get rid of two genres in one movie," Parker told *Box Office* magazine in an interview during production of ANGEL HEART. One shudders to think how close he came to making good on that statement. □

## ESCAPES

continued from page 48

and "Think Twice," about a mugger who picks on the wrong victim, a street person with magic powers. Two short bits of 5 and 8 minutes each, are "Coffee Break," about an obnoxious, harried delivery van driver who winds up in a terminally laid-back town; and "Jonah's Dream," about an old woman who has an encounter with an alien spacecraft.

Technical credits are good, particularly for a shot-on-video feature (heretofore mostly the domain of low-rent pornography). An unidentified computer-enhanced process was applied to the video images, resulting in noticeably better picture quality than would be expected. The cast, presumably drawn from the Sacramento area where ESCAPES was shot, is quite competent overall, another mild surprise.

Comparing ESCAPES to TWILIGHT ZONE, et al., as the promotional literature repeatedly does, only makes the show look worse. Viewers lured by Price's presence will undoubtedly feel let down. □



## HOUSE II

continued from page 39

jump up into the shot every five minutes because when I do resort to that it becomes more meaningful.

"Let's be honest here," continued Wiley. "We have taken the oldest concept in the world—the haunted house—and thought about it in new terms divorced from the history of cinema that has dulled our senses. In some ways I think we are reworking those old '50s horror movies like *HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL* where Vincent Price provided the mix of thrills and laughter."

Noted special effects expert Chris (THE FLY) Walas designed the unusual creatures seen in *HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY* as well as the makeup for Gramps and the main zombie villain, Slim. Two of the creatures play key roles in the film. One, called a *caterpuppy*, attaches itself to Jonathan Stark's leg in the fantasy jungle segment and remains with him for the rest of the film. As the name suggests it resembles a caterpillar combined with a puppy face and was designed after Walas and Ethan Wiley made numerous trips to zoos and aquariums to observe shapes and movement. The second is *Bippy* (a name devised by the marketing department), a two foot high baby pterodactyl.

The basic creature effects will be augmented by 17 stop-motion sequences animated by Phil Tippet to effectively establish the baby pterodactyl running upstairs and destroying a kitchen as well as other prehistoric monster flashes in the jungle. The makeup for Slim, the gunfighter from beyond the grave, is a full prosthetic mask designed by Walas and sculpted by Mike Smithson.

Said Walas' second-in-command Jim "Smash" Isaacs, who supervised the effects filming on set, "With the director's input we made a couple of very simple but

effective puppets instead of a bunch to do a range of different expressions. Usually we need about three puppets for each creature, but in this case just one was enough with a dummy back-up. The shots have been designed and framed to work around each puppet's limitations. Ethan Wiley has worked in our area so he knew the best way to get what he wanted." □

## SUPERMAN IV

continued from page 21

ceived a letter from Taff asking if he'd had any luck getting his treatment read at Warners. Annoyed, Reeve testified he chucked the letter in the wastebasket.

On December 22, Reeve met with Cannon chief Menachem Golan and told him his story idea for *SUPERMAN IV*. And in January, they negotiated a contract for Reeve to work on the film. In mid January, writers Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal were brought in to participate in the first *SUPERMAN IV* story meeting with Reeve and Cannon execs. Konner and Rosenthal had allegedly been called in to pitch ideas to Reeve, but Reeve rejected all of them. In testimony, Rosenthal claimed he and Konner came up with the key story points Reeve claims to have originated. In fact, a story treatment Reeve produced prior to Rosenthal's deposition was dismissed by Rosenthal as essentially fabricated.

Subsequent to his dealing with Cannon, Reeve began to announce in the press and on TV that he had come up with an exciting basis for a new sequel, an idea so good it led him to change his mind about participating in one. Taff and Stoller weren't quite sure at that point whether Reeve had lifted their story idea. But as story elements became known, friends of theirs, among them Milius, called up to congratulate them for selling



Maureen O'Sullivan (left) with *STRANDED* aliens (l to r) Brendan Hughes, Dennis Vero, Spice Williams, Florence Schaffner and Flea, in makeups by Michelle Burke.

Reeve and the studios on their treatment. When Taff and Stoller received a copy of the film's script in late 1986, they filed suit for \$45 million in damages. The script was packed, they contended, with their story ideas. "Basically, they took our story, ripped it apart, and put in a lot of schlock," said Taff.

Reeve, meanwhile, hasn't responded well to this assault on his integrity. Early in the Spring of 1987, Reeve appeared on *THE TONIGHT SHOW*. After his spot, he went back stage, where he was greeted by an attractive woman who asked if she could give him something. Reeve reportedly grinned and extended his hand. He received a court summons. According to sources present at the time, Reeve went into a rage, forcing Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon to stop taping their show and to move backstage to mollify the actor. Reeve had reportedly been scheduled to appear on other talkshows during that week. He subsequently cancelled out. The actor has since indicated that he will walk off any show that asks him about the Taff and Stoller lawsuit. That is precisely what he did when appearing on a segment of *ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT*.

Meanwhile, one source has rumored that insurance companies for Cannon and Warner Bros plan to shift the burden of any wrongdoing onto Reeve, who is reputed to be in the process of safeguarding his personal assets so that they will not be endangered by the outcome of any jury trial.

"It's ironic," said Taff, "that the man who portrays the character and image of the most powerful being in the universe who stands for truth, justice, and the American way, resorts to theft and plagiarism in his attempt at creative effort."

Attempts to reach Reeve through his lawyer or studio executives for comment were unsuccessful. □

## STRANDED

continued from page 23

lenges of a story like this is credibility," offered Fuller. "Coming from a background in documentaries, I'm very concerned about verisimilitude—making the unbelievable believable. Michele Burke's makeups really made the creatures work. Alan Castle had originally described aliens in his script that were on the bizarre and fanciful side. I made a decision to try to make them more human, so the audience would be able to identify with them."

As makeup artist Michelle Burke recalled it, the producers of *STRANDED* literally gave her a blank sheet of paper and said, "We want five aliens, and we haven't a clue what they should look like." Burke did some library research on close encounters for inspiration.

With names like Queen, Sir, Prince, Jester, and Warrior, the aliens—seeking temporary refuge on Earth because their kingdom is in an upheaval—comprise a veritable otherworldly royal court. Queen (Florence Schaffner); her son, Prince (Brendan Hughes); Diadre's love interest; and Queen's concubine-companion, Sir (Dennis Vero). Additionally, there are two servants: Warrior (bodybuilder-actress Spice Williams), a reptilian bodyguard/fighter; and Jester (Flea, bass player for the funk-rock band the Red Hot Chili Peppers), a kind of nursemaid-companion-pet.

Fuller feels that *STRANDED* will have a broad appeal because the aliens, the weapons, their mode of travel, language, etc., is all "sophisticated and intriguing enough to titillate the palate of any science fiction buff. What it has in addition is this larger drama about real people in a very unreal situation. It's happening to characters that are ultimately, I think, very interesting and appealing. It's a good story. It just happens to be science fiction." □

Gramps (Royal Dano) nurses the Caterpuppy in *HOUSE II*, makeup and puppet effects by Chris Walas. The film's director, Ethan Wiley, worked for Walas on *GREMLINS*.







**Terry O'Quinn as THE STEPFATHER** suddenly bludgeons a victim with a 2x4, violence that surprises and shocks.

## THE STEPFATHER

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who could slip from identity to identity."

Ruben praised O'Quinn for being an incredibly adept technical actor, remembering the performer's casual assurance in handling a very difficult scene. "It was the scene where he's got a knife in his heart and he's dying," said Ruben. "He's got to look down at his step daughter and tell her he loves her. It was a real complicated acting moment. We set the shot up and I look around for Terry and he's joking around and laughing with the craft service people. I said, 'Terry, c'mon dammit, we got to do the shot.' He jumps in front of the camera, the camera rolls, and—bam!—he's in character, he's dying, he's physically trembling, voice quivering, he's really believable. These are his dying words. He does the take, topples out of frame, gets up and goes back and keeps on playing."

Ruben had a specific idea of the wholesome look he wanted for the film. "I wanted it to look like Norman Rockwell," he said. "I wanted everything to look safe and very American. I would tell the people who were looking for house locations for us that I wanted the houses to look like places where nothing bad could happen. And as the movie gets deeper into the story, we wanted to darken the look and make it more nightmarish. By the time you're in the endgame, it was all much darker, a lot of light and shadow and slightly skewed angles. And I always like to put a lot of movement in. It just gives it an energy, a life."

Ruben had to abandon one interesting idea he had to stress the

contrast between the normalcy of the setting and the horror of the story. "I wanted a crane shot where Stephanie is at the window in the bathroom screaming, shooting outside in, and the crane moves off the house down to the front lawn where you see a guy going by on his bike and another guy mowing the lawn."

In this post-JAGGED EDGE era of bloated and misshapen thrillers, THE STEPFATHER is a tidy little entertainment package that delivers the goods much better than its bigger-budgeted competitors. There's still some hope that with improved ad campaigns and new markets, the film will catch on. It has done well in cities such as San Francisco and Detroit.

Meanwhile, Ruben is already working on his next project, a horror/thriller for United Artists called CHILD'S PLAY, which he describes as a combination of THE EXORCIST and THE TERMINATOR. The film is about a boy and his doll, which has "strange capabilities." Ruben promised that it will be "a slam bang, exciting movie, with elements of a psychological thriller blended with a little bit of the supernatural." □

## ANIMATION

continued from page 49

en Down Film," by Osamu Tezuka, a meta-media catalogue of projection difficulties that, at nearly six minutes, is both too long and too cute by half. Much better is Paul Vester's ebullient opener, "Sunbeam," a beautiful co-ordination of spirited music and inspired brushstrokes.

No animation collection would be complete these days without the newest, most vaunted, and some say over-hyped animation technique, computer graphics. The 19th Tournee included a fabulous example of the form from France, but the very brief items here—Pacific Data's "Chromosaurus" and "A Comic Zoom" and ILM's John

Lasseter and Alvy Ray Smith's "Andre and Wally B."—should not cause Max Headroom to lose any sleep. At this point in the art/science, once problem is that the wonder at the technique, the viewer's consciousness of the sheer CRT mastery required to produce these images, works against a ready entry into the imaginative world. Besides, at 30 seconds "Chromosaurus" barely has time to strut his stuff before evaporating into the memory disc.

The stand-out hit is Kirk Henderson's "Cat and Mouse (At the Old Folk's Home)," a loving tribute to the cheerful demolition of the Tom and Jerry cartoons, made for the feature FLICKS (13:6:17). The two venerable rivals reminisce about the good old days, denigrate the cut-rate drawings on television, and concede that well, yes, their old cartoons were excessively cruel and violent—before launching into an uproarious slugfest of the sort to give Action for Children's Television palpitations. The buoyant response to the vintage chaos and cruelty (mouse sticks cat's tail in electrical outlet, cat blasts dog, etc.) by audiences of all ages indicates just how palpably viewers hunger for the good-humored, socially irresponsible creativity of the classic Chuck Jones/Tex Avery shorts—before prohibitive expense and the do-gooders put the kibosh on family hour havoc.

In audience affection, the only real rival for "Cat and Mouse" was the trailer tacked-on to the beginning of the film, a promo for Will Vinton's CLAYMATION FESTIVAL. For the most part, the collection is strictly G-rated, studiously avoiding the disorienting, not to say violent and sexy, fringe of much contemporary art school animation. Parents bring their kids to these things and the extremities of fright, sadness, or sensuality are cushioned over. Thus, though the pieces never fail to be visually exciting, only a few of the entries tap animation's darker side. For example, George

Griffin's "It's An OK Life," is a creepy Orwellian tale of a mechanical everyman, rendered in a suitably high-tech, mass-produced manner. Also, both "I Was A Thanksgiving Turkey," an I-am-the-camera effort complete with a fowl out-of-body experience, and the sea storm in Stephen Weston and Taylor Grant's realization of an old sea chanty, "The Wreck of the Julie Plante," are moody and forbidding, each making stark, spooky use of shadows and the monochromatic scale.

Though nothing here proves to be a transcendent gem, the ANIMATION CELEBRATION is still about twenty-two times more interesting than most of the cinema for grown-ups. □

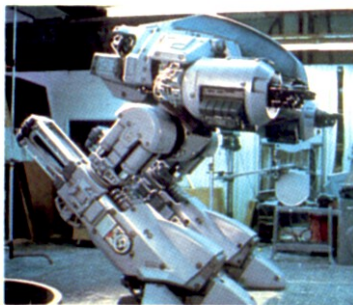
## ROBOCOP

continued from page 6

Weller considered himself "putty in the hands of a master." He sees his performance in terms of a "human being," not a robot, "who's been transformed into the body of a cyborg. The heart of all this is a morality tale, about a man who is transformed into a machine, but, then, regains his humanity. It's akin to BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, or the story of the Tin Man in THE WIZARD OF OZ. There's a great, but tiny little jewel of a story in the midst of all this bigger notion of an action film. The machine finds out that it's human."

Weller characterized Verhoeven as a "manic and driven" director, the intensity of the filmmaker producing what he called an atmosphere of "constructive pressure." Weller echoed Lord Olivier's sentiment, that "acting is a learnable art. If you have some instinct of human nature, you can learn it." Weller was trained, and expressed a preference for, roles that are "of more emotional substance." But the two films which have given him the most fun so far are THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI and ROBOCOP. □

**ROBOCOP** vanquishes police droid ED-209 (right) in a stop-motion scene animated by Phil Tippett. Craig Davies designed ED-209 and built a full size motionless model (below) for filming.







Joe Zito directed Cannon hits **MISSING IN ACTION** and **INVASION USA** and was to film **SPIDER-MAN** for the studio.

## SPIDER-MAN

continued from page 5

create for Spider-Man. It would have been a mistake to set Spidey, in his red and blue outfit, onto a brightly-lit street in Santa Monica. I wanted his world to look slightly askew—sort of with a quarter of a foot into the door of BRAZIL. I agreed with Stan Lee that Spider-Man's world had to be very real, but I also thought there had to be a sense that this was not a completely literal environment."

Zito hired four storyboard artists to help him design the film. Chief among them was Mentor Huebner whose credits included DUNE and FORBIDDEN PLANET. "He's wonderful," said Zito. "An old-school pro and a real artist. His boards were inspiring to everyone. I could show them to anyone and they would understand the movie."

Zito also hired Nikita Knatz who had actually drawn Spider-Man for Marvel. Knatz knew how Spider-Man moved and had a sense of delivering a composition that, while referencing comic books, did not become engulfed by their conventions. Preproduction, which kept Zito busy for the better part of last year also involved extensive special effects work.

"We had to do things that had never been done before," said Zito. "Sets had to be built on angles. Spider-Man moves in ways unlike those of a stuntman on wires—I didn't want to see wires or use wires."

Equipping Doc Oc with fully-realized radio-controlled mechanical tentacles also proved challenging. But hardest of all was getting the web-generating process right. "I didn't want to use the conventional animation you see in cartoons," said Zito. "You can turn the TV on and see that stuff any time. This had to be different

...and dazzling."

Zito even began casting. He wanted an unknown to play Spider-Man because he didn't want to deal with the "baggage" a star might bring. One of those considered for the part was Scott Leva, a stuntman who had played Spidey at public outings. Zito had hoped to sign Bob Hoskins as Doc Oc.

"And Stan Lee was not very subtly vying for the part of J. Jonah Jameson [Spidey's boss]," said Zito, laughing. "He always reminded me how good he'd be for the part. Yes, I was considering him."

But Cannon suddenly shelved the project, according to sources who worked on the production, after dropping a neat \$1.5 million in preproduction, though they continue to run trade ads without Zito's name [Zito is rumored now to be discussing the project with New World]. Those involved in the production offer a number of explanations for this turn of events. Zito believes that Cannon backed off because "A lot of the demons we glossed over with our enthusiasm resurfaced to haunt the company." This included the realization by Cannon executives that Spider-Man was simply not well enough known throughout the world to justify, in their minds, the expense of making the film.

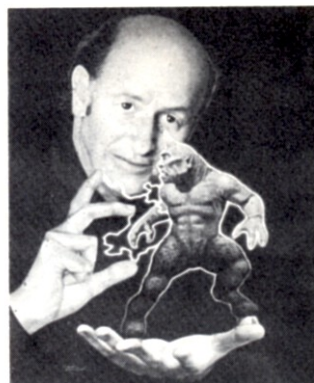
While Spider-Man had received ample exposure on television, they believed that this, too, worked against the project. But there were other reasons as well. Cannon found itself in dire financial trouble last year, bailed out by Warner Bros to the tune of \$75 million. The risk of losing \$15 million stopped being acceptable.

Meanwhile, Golan shifted gears, throwing his weight behind SUPERMAN IV. Cannon couldn't have handled both productions, and Christopher Reeve had been hired on in a pay or play deal. Paying Reeve and Gene Hackman and Margot Kidder and Jackie Cooper for a movie that had to be delayed would have cost Cannon more than \$1.5 million. Spider-Man suddenly became expendable. Zito feels the unpaid option money to Marvel is a smokescreen that masks the true reasons for the project's demise.

Most of those who worked on the project are despondent over this turn of events. But they don't fault Cannon. Zito and Lee both say that they sensed in Menachem Golan a sincere appreciation for the project and an understanding for their concern for its integrity. But in business terms, given Cannon's travails, this was one web better left unspun for the moment. □

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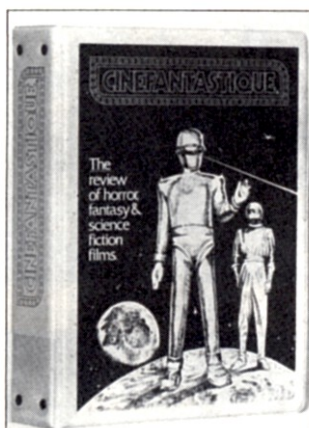
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## STAR TREK

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mount nixed the suggestion, arguing that even reassembling the series' grossly undervalued supporting actors would have proved too expensive.

The script for the premier episode is called "Encounter at Farpoint," a reference to an enormous space city which will be built on Paramount's Stage 16, one of three stages allotted to the series thus far. The space-city reportedly includes a huge shopping mall which runs down the entire length of the stage. The stage will also have a large center room that will be converted into a courtroom, and Lt. Ryker's Farpoint apartment, complete with patio, a main room, a bathroom and a corridor. Other sets for the pilot include the interior of an alien spaceship—equipped with its very own torture chamber—assorted tunnels, and something called an "energy gate," a concept which Roddenberry was still grappling with as the script took shape.

The new Enterprise would make a grown Scotsman cry. It'll be over double the size of the old Enterprise—1,230 meters long. Although it will suggest a progression from the old Federation starship designs, the ship will be built for comfort, and will incorporate aesthetic considerations one wouldn't ordinarily expect in a vessel weighing 50 billion tons. Its windows will be curved, furniture will flare into the floor, and the ship will have carpets instead of the standard-issue iron grates audiences have grown accustomed to seeing.

The new Enterprise bridge, which will occupy a large part of Stage 6, will be oval-shaped, and viewed overhead. Ramps will stretch around the captain's chair and come down on both sides of it. The raised area in back will have five stations. The view screen will be 15' wide and 10' high, significantly larger than that either in the old TV series or in the films. To ensure a wide enough camera angle to view the screen from the captain's perspective, a pit was dug on one side of the bridge. Otherwise, the required camera angle would have been blocked by the bridge floor.

The bridge will also feature a captain's ready-room, where private conversations can be had without forcing an exit to the captain's cabin. The ship will be run by a giant computer that can be accessed anywhere on the ship. A shining black plastic surface is designed to run down the side of every corridor, enabling the computer to provide graphic and voice information.

Yet another 24th century innovation is the "holodeck," which traces its origin to the defunct STAR TREK animated cartoon series, in which the Enterprise was equipped with a deck that used holograms to create realistic off-ship settings. In the new show the interactive holodeck allows crew members to experience the reality of travel to far-off places with the use of stock footage. In the original series pilot, "The Cage," illusions could be made subjectively real for participants. The rationale for breaking the Federation embargo on this kind of technology is that 30 years is a long time to be cooped-up.

Slightly less than half of the shows planned will take place on alien worlds. The rest will transpire aboard the Enterprise or will involve ship-to-ship activity. Budgets for the basic sets have been set at \$800,000. Additional sets for the first episode have been budgeted at another \$250,000 to \$300,000. And set budgets for subsequent episodes have been set at \$50,000. But informed sources within the production believe that three times that will have to be spent to assure the feature-film quality they believe the series must have to be successful.

According to the industry trade journal *Variety*, Paramount has already cleared the show to run on 136 TV stations reaching 85% of the U.S. television market, including 28 of the top 30 markets, mostly stations that already carry re-runs of the original series. The station's give Paramount seven minutes of commercial time to sell for airing the show and keep five minutes to sell on their own, an arrangement called a "barter" deal. If the new series flops Paramount already has plans to offer the new episodes in a re-run package with the original show. ☐

## DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

continued from page 42

The story follows Bill and Jo, two sighted survivors, as they make their mad dash from the doomed city to the countryside, where they set up house in a lordly manor. The actors do a fair job of taking their predicament seriously and sometimes the production even becomes literate.

And yet it never surprises. Instead, it exudes a certain kitchen cosiness endemic in most such stories coming out of Britain. Recall, for instance, the BBC's 1975 series, *THE SURVIVORS*, which was scripted by Terry Nation. In this, a plague wipes out most of the population. In both series, Armageddon sweeps aside the brutish proles and the greedy upper



classes, and the bourgeois survivors settle into a pastoral existence marked by logs in the fireplace, thick soups cooked up in a country kitchen, and the serious business of making babies, within the confines, of course, of matrimony.

And if you look closely, you'll notice that none of the lower class characters in this series make it through the apocalypse. They seem sympathetically portrayed, if a bit spotty and underfed. But the stupid gits end up as plant fertilizer when they haven't done themselves in eating boxes of Tide detergent they thought were cornflakes.

Life in the cities takes no time at all to come undone. The mob has begun breaking windows even before our protagonist manages to remove the bandages from his post-operative eyes. It does make for drama of a sort, but not bloody likely drama. And it doesn't help much to trot out the stock footage of London, deserted and menacing like a dozen towns we've seen in a hundred movies about the day the world ended. It only works when the idea seems inconceivable. As it was when Wells was writing books. Now it's just tiresome. □

## LYLE CONWAY

continued from page 30

you can't see it as anything else. When I saw the first assembly with an audience I was sure they wouldn't be convinced. Seymour sang and bled, the plant grunted and grew and the audience laughed at it. My heart sank. Then Frank turned to me and said, "Relax. It's a comedy!"

Conway had to do some quick thinking during the filming of the Coffee Can Audrey II when director Frank Oz decided on the set that he *didn't* want the plant to smile when Seymour lifts its head. "The plant had a hard dental acrylic head," said Conway. "I couldn't think of any quick way to change it except to turn it upside down, so I broke it apart and reconnected it, and it worked. The little overbite that it had gave it a pouting look when it was turned upside down. I never did tell Oz how simple the solution was.

At twelve and a half feet high, "Mean Green" was the largest version of Audrey II, difficult not only to build but also to maneuver. It weighed over a ton. The pod itself was supported by a pole arm through the set wall which was capable of vertical and horizontal movement.

"Doing something that big and keeping it moving was difficult," said Conway. "We could relocate the pole arm depending on where

the camera was, so the head blocked it from view. If the set-up was moved from one corner to the other, it was a three day move. We'd have to break the plant down shift it over to the other side of the flower shop and then put it back together again. There were three flower shop sets so that they could still be shooting on another size plant while we were doing the move."

"Mean Green" featured a specially designed mouth for quick dressing. The mouth interior of lightweight silk was able to snap out, on poppers, so a new one could be put in when necessary. This feature resulted in an apparent lapse in continuity in the final edited print. "Mean Green" was meant to change color from a violet mouth to a red mouth when Ellen Greene got eaten," said Conway. The decision to let her character live results in an abrupt shift from a violet to red mouth without explanation.

Conway singled out for special praise "Mean Green" puppeteers Mak Wilson and Anthony Asbury. "Wilson works hard within a group to create character whether it's lips, eyes, or key operator," said Conway. "Animatronics is no place for anyone who feels they're not a star unless they have their hand up a puppet's ass!"

"Asbury is 'Mean Green Mother'—not only did he do a great job, but he did it seemingly effortlessly. It was a massive task, and I don't remember him even working up a sweat. And I thought it was going to be next to impossible!" Key operator Asbury worked inside the "Mean Green" pod, moving the jaws. He was recruited for the film after a stint as a plant performer in the London stage production of "Little Shop."

Audrey II's army of vines seem to pass unnoticed but their graceful and positive articulation perfectly complement head and lip movement. "Mean Green" fea-



Filming Feed Me with Rick Moranis in *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*. The mouth of the 4 1/2 foot puppet was moved by the arms of a puppeteer, behind and out of frame.

tured fifteen mechanical vines, thirteen baby pods, three roots, Ellen Greene's mechanical legs and a variety of wall vines. While these didn't work everyday, when they did a core group of twelve operators expanded to include fifty performers, all linked by video and headsets to the director and to Conway. Operators were put behind the walls of the flower shop and even under the set floor, built over a tank on the Pinewood stages. The lip performers rehearsed three months prior to filming. In this way, they could literally shift gears at a moment's notice while shooting.

The vines were cable controlled with a core to limit torque and provide extremely positive movement. They could flail about and stop on a dime or do very delicate movements. A number of "special" vines were made for answering and dialing the telephone, and for impatient drumming of the plant's "fingers." Said Conway, "We knew the vine mechanisms were super but we didn't know they were as good as Don Austin and Chris Leith performed them."

The plant operators who worked beneath the floor of the flower shop in the stage's tank, toiled in

an area dubbed "the pit," which was lit by the half light of twenty video monitors linked to the movie camera above. "The pit had three small exit trap doors for the 50 puppeteers down there," Conway recalled with a shudder. "It smelled sweaty like a slave ship. When you walked on their doors they screamed and yelled like in the horror story 'Billy Goat Gruff.' I went down there at night and the walls were covered with obscene graffiti, and they had made marionettes out of milk cartons, fried chicken and garbage to pass the time. I wouldn't dream of going down there while we were shooting, it was too frightening—like the underground realm of the Morlocks in *THE TIME MACHINE*. Our shop guys would toss coins to see who would go down and make repairs—we had to tie ropes around their waists for survival!"

Conway's work carried from the preproduction period all the way through shooting. And usually after filming was completed for the day. "We used a lot of K-Y jelly to make the mouth interior look wet," said Conway. "Gallons of K-Y. Every night we'd have to scrape it off with a piece of cardboard and then wash the entire head, including the inside of the mouth, to keep it from drying out. Every night there was at least an hour's work. Sometimes two and three hours work after shooting. Basically this was cleaning it up and re-painting it, patching tears to keep it going."

After supervising the enormous undertaking of the plant construction for *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, is there any philosophical statement that Conway would like to make, any insight that he learned during the long production schedule?

"I never want to make another plant again!" Conway laughed. "It never fails to amaze me how much time and energy it takes to make something look effortless!" □

Chief mechanical designer Christian Ostwald prepares the aluminum understructure for Mean Green. In foreground is the plant's hard Kevlar shell over which its foam skin is stretched. The teeth are soft polyurethane, the stuff used inside pillows.





# LETTERS

## IF HE HAS THE ANSWER HE'S LIKELY TO FORGET IT REAL FAST

It was nice to see someone trying to be really honest about the Trek movies ("What's Wrong With STAR TREK," 17:3/4:27). Many non-Trekkers (it's spelled with two K's) miss sight of the obvious (like yourself). Shatner and Co. are cult heroes (that's *really* why Paramount made these films). For, without the popularity of the syndicated T.V. series there would be no saga.

How will the original crew pass their legacy on to the "Next Generation?" Hopefully, Bill Shatner has an answer to this question...

Charles Thompson Jr.  
Inkster, MI

## DO VULCANS SMOKE?

The fat Scotty comments aside, I found only one negative association in the June '87 double issue on the STAR TREK trilogy... and that is the ugly photo of Leonard Nimoy with lighted cigarette in hand [17:3/4:85]. If anyone doubts that Nimoy is not Spock, this should prove it. Most illogical.

Jeff Nelson  
Astoria, OR

## A PULSE POUNDER IN IOWA

Dennis Fischer's review of Alan Parker's ANGEL HEART (17:3/4:114) is almost as shocking as the film itself. Am I to believe that Mr. Fischer knew how the movie was going to end? After all, he did call the revelations "predictable." I honestly don't see how he, or anyone else for that matter, could have.

ANGEL HEART is, without a

doubt, the best film of 1987. I left the theatre shaking quite noticeably, and everyone else I know felt the same. If Mr. Fischer really did find this masterpiece tepid and dumb, then maybe someone should see if he has a pulse.

Tim Sanders  
Council Bluffs, IA

## ALIENS REVIEWER ANSWERS CRITIC

T. Miles Crawford complains in his letter [17:3/4:126] "Not only did you seemingly search for someone who didn't like ALIENS, but you had him create this ridiculous notion that Cameron stole [elements of the film] from Heinlein."

Contrary to Crawford's statement, I made no "accusations of plagiarism" in my review, which was prompted by editor Frederick S. Clarke after I wrote a letter pointing out apparent similarities between ALIENS and Robert Heinlein's novel *Starship Troopers*. (The review headline, which could be taken to imply plagiarism, was not written by me.) I merely listed the similarities and differences between the two works and left it up to readers to judge.

"So what was the point in even bringing it up...?" Crawford exclaims. The point was to observe that ALIENS is not as original in some of its set-pieces and concepts as it might appear to those unfamiliar with Heinlein's work. This observation in no way implies theft on Mr. Cameron's part since, as I said, "Coincidences do happen."

My negative appraisal of ALIENS clearly puts me in the minority. But that's okay. Wasn't it Heinlein—or one of his cantankerous fictional characters—who

said that the majority is always wrong?

Douglas Borton  
Los Angeles, CA

## LOOKS LIKE DEMONS PULLED A FAST ONE ON THE OL' RATINGS BOARD

I don't know what version of DEMONS was seen by your reviewer [17:2:44]—but the one I saw had a very different ending. Cheryl and George are rescued by a family in a jeep, but Cheryl turns into a demon and is coolly blown away by the boy riding shotgun.

There may be "lights out there" (not for Cheryl!) but behind the lights there is always shadow and darkness—a moral of this movie as well as those of Romero and others!

J. T. Moore  
Ponca City, OK

[Apparently there are a number of different DEMONS to choose from. The videocassette was released barely a week after the

film entered theatres and contains some eleven minutes of footage pared from the theatrical version to meet the requirements of an R rating. Some of these longer versions have apparently been made available for theatrical runs. The variant ending neither negates or undermines my review. If anything, it strengthens my observations.

Rob Winning]

## CORRECTION: THE BROKEST NAME IN COMPUTER GRAPHICS

As we went to press last issue with our story on Omnibus Computer Graphics (17:3/4:18), termed by us as "the biggest name in computer graphics," the company went bankrupt and ceased operations. The work we pictured from FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR and credited to Omnibus subsidiary Digital Productions, was actually completed by the defunct Omnibus. The bigger they come, the harder they fall.

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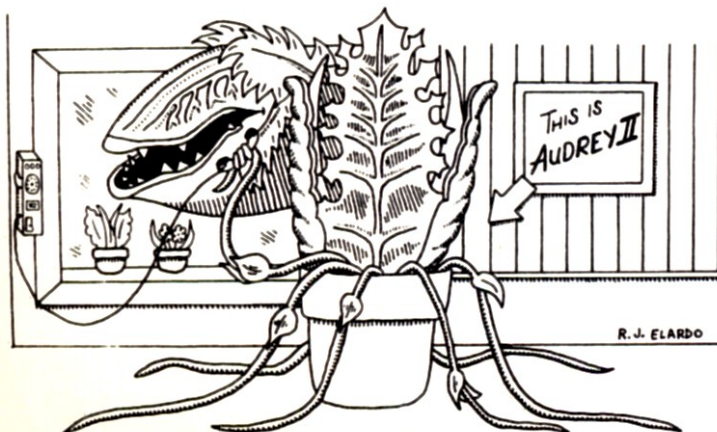
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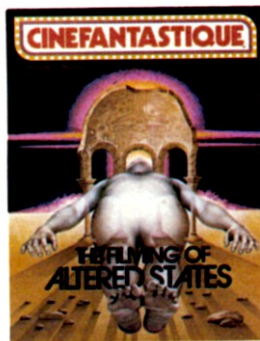
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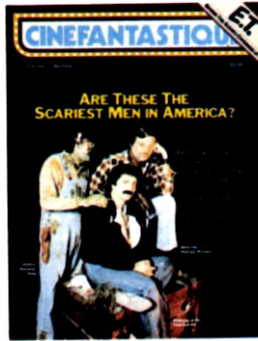
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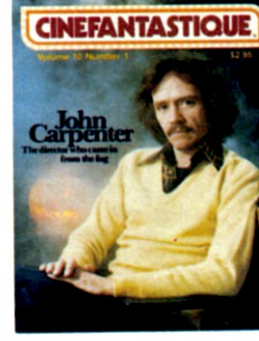
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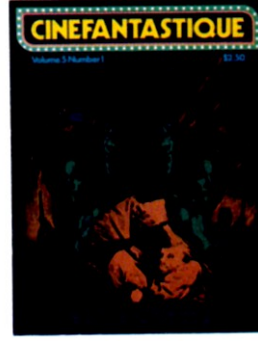
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